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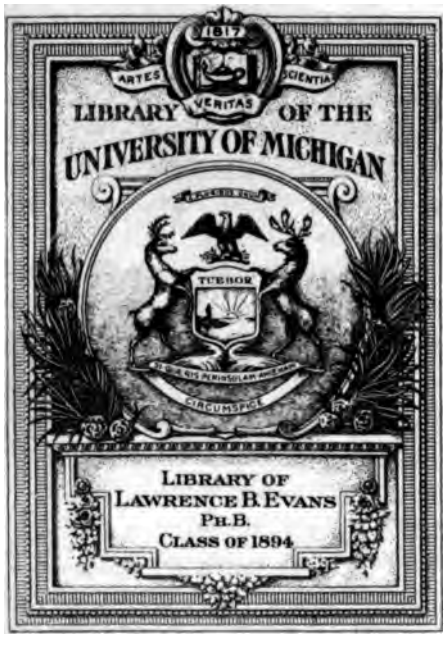

THE GIFT OF
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VOLUME II

BOOK III — THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

BOOK IV — POLITICAL PARTIES

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BOOK III

THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

CHAPTER I

THE UPPER CHAMBER

I

We have seen that since 1792, while the Chief of the Executive has from time to time been called King or Emperor, there has been no royalty in France, if we understand by that word a perpetual corporation represented by an individual who has received from his predecessors immemorial attributes, in turn to be handed on to a successor. In the same way there have been assemblies of delegates known by the name of Senators, Peers, or Deputies, which have met and performed functions prescribed by constitutional statute, but the expression Senate, or Chamber of Peers, or Chamber of Deputies, has never had a signification analogous to that of House of Lords or House of Commons in our country, indicating permanent corporations which have inherited and will bequeath certain powers and traditions.

The French legislative bodies since the Revolution no doubt have reflected the national will, but it has been the will of an hour; to-day enthusiastic and aggressive; to-morrow passive to the abandonment of everything. It might be interesting to examine the powers and composition of all the houses of legislature set up in France,

under more than a dozen constitutions from the day that the Third Estate in the Tennis Court at Versailles consecrated the Constituent Assembly down to the foundation of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies under the Third Republic in 1875; but the result of such an examination would be rather the history of the varying moods of the French people during three generations, than a serious study in government.

It can be of no practical utility, for example, to compare, with earlier or later systems, either the Parliament of Louis Philippe, its nominated Chamber of Peers and its Lower House elected on a limited franchise, or the Legislature of the Second Empire and its Chamber, the product of universal suffrage in leading strings. This was the experience of the National Assembly in 1875. They found that the only lesson to be learned from the constitutions which France had enjoyed since the Revolution was that, whatever the electoral franchise, whether there were one Chamber or two, and whatever the relations of the legislature with the executive, the end was always the same — insurrection or *coup d'état*. It behooved the Assembly, therefore, to conceive some combination which had not been essayed by previous constituent legislators. By chance they lighted on a system not hitherto tried, and as it has survived for over a score of years, its most long-lived predecessors having expired at the age of seventeen, it may be regarded as a not unsuccessful creation.

The first question that the National Assembly had to decide in constructing a new legislature was whether it should have one Chamber or two. Here past history gave no aid, though the problem has agitated reformers since the dawn of representative institutions in France. Lall

Tollendal, in the name of the commission delegated by the first representatives of the nation to draw up a scheme of constitution, said, a month after the fall of the Bastille, "With one Chamber you can destroy everything, without two Chambers you can found nothing."[1] Danton, on the other hand, two years later, at the Jacobin Club, denounced the system of two Chambers as "the invention of the priest Siéyès to destroy the constitution and liberty."[2] That the men of '89 were in favour of two Chambers, and that their violent successors favoured a single one is a reason why the doctrinaires of this century should prefer the double system. It is to be observed that the Constitution of 1875 was the work of the exponents of the doctrine of 1789. The debates in the National Assembly were of high excellence, and were to a great extent conducted by elderly men of that school whom only one generation divided from the Revolution. The Legitimists had obviously little to say. The Imperialists refrained from taking part in a discussion foreign to their ideas of government. The new Republicans abstained also; they were then identified with the rising genius of Gambetta, who said practically to the Assembly, "In principle I am in favour of one legislative chamber;[3] but if you prefer the other system, let us have it, as it is a point of detail of small importance, now that you have shown that the only use you can make of an overwhelming monarchical majority

[1] Rapport du Comité de Constitution, 19 Août, 1789.

[2] June 21, 1791.

[3] In a speech at Tours six years later (August 6, 1881), Gambetta described himself as "partisan convaincu des deux chambres," but this was only a rhetorical exordium to a severe attack on the Senate, which had recently rejected his "scrutin de liste," and to an argument in favour of its reform.

is to establish the Republic." This somewhat disdainful attitude of the popular leader, daily reassured that the country was with him, was justified. Reactionaries declared openly that a Second Chamber was needful, as a barrier to prevent the revolutionary party from coming into power by legal means, signifying by the revolutionary party Gambetta and his followers, who, in four years, were masters of the Senate as well as of the Lower House.

The attributes of the new Senate were thus discussed in the Assembly almost solely by members of the Left Centre, where the boundary-line was faint between Orleanism of the old school and doctrinaire Republicanism, and the speeches are interesting as the utterances of men who had grown up with survivors of 1789, who had listened to controversies under the Restoration, when constitutional studies were the order of the day, and who had looked upon the Revolution of July as the reconsecration of the new era. It is not surprising that a debate conducted by men who, born under the Revolutionary Calendar, had seen the rise and fall of all the régimes of the century, should be pervaded by an air of scepticism. The general argument seemed to be that while in France it mattered little in practice whether there were one or two legislative Chambers, the result being always the same, it was the tradition of the doctrinaires to admire the English Constitution, which has two Chambers. Moreover, the great offspring of the English system, and the most powerful republic of modern times, the United States, set great store by its Senate. Therefore France ought to have a Second Chamber, though the past had not proved its utility, and it was difficult to construct one on a new and a not discredited plan.

It was pointed out that twice only since the Revolution had a constituent assembly dispensed with a Second Chamber, once under a king in 1791, when the controversy ended on the scaffold; and again under a Republic in 1848, when the result was the Coup d'État of December, 1851. Both those constitutions, however, contained in themselves, it was argued, the germ of destruction, in having an executive power independent of the legislature; in the former case a constitutional monarch (for so Louis XVI. had become), whose head a Second Chamber might have saved, but not his crown; and under the Second Republic a President elected directly by universal suffrage.

On the other hand there was the historical fact that the system of two Chambers had not postponed for a day other revolutions; and that the most important *coup d'état* the world ever saw, that of the 18 Brumaire, was effected against a legislature divided into two assemblies, one of which indeed aided Bonaparte in executing his violence on the other. An incident was narrated of the Revolution of 1848. The stormy incidents at the Chamber of Deputies the day of the downfall of the Orleans dynasty are famous, when an heroic young mother vainly appealed to the people to accept a regency in favour of the child clinging to her skirts, destined to live and to die an exile. The Chamber of Peers was sitting expectant in its solitary palace. An unconcerned member, the Marquis de St. Priest, sauntering in was accosted by M. Molé, who asked him in agitated tones if he knew what was happening — the Lower House invaded by the insurgents and the deputies expelled. "I believe they are on the way to turn us out," added the affrighted ex-minister. "Do not flatter yourself, M. le

Comte," replied M. de St. Priest, "they will never come here": and it was so: the peace of the Luxembourg was not disturbed.

After the principle of a Second Chamber had been accepted by the Assembly, the ingenuity of its members was sorely tried to devise a Senate which should differ in some respect from the Chamber of Deputies. We have seen, in examining the powers of the President, that the Assembly voted that the Senate should be elected, like the Chamber of Deputies, by universal suffrage,[1] Orleanists and Bonapartists aiding the Republicans to carry this provision. When Marshal MacMahon disallowed this vote, the most advanced Republicans made no protest. It was felt that as the creation of a Second Chamber was inevitable, it was reasonable to demand that it should be constructed on lines somewhat different from those of the Lower House. It was candidly owned in debate that this was only a concession to form; for if 300 members were transferred by lot from the National Assembly into another hall of the Palace of Versailles, and there told that they composed a Senate endowed with certain powers of control over their late colleagues, it was argued that within a month they would develop an entirely different spirit.[2] This satirical suggestion contains the true argument in favour of Second Chambers. In modern communities, even in those which have retained in the body politic an aristocratic element, class distinction no longer exists in the sense of a dividing line between social categories which have no sentiments in common. It is therefore impossible to devise any system of two Chambers, whereby the Upper

[1] Ass. Nat. Séance du 11 Février, 1875.
[2] M. Laboulaye: A. N. Séance du 12 Février, 1875.

House, whatever its basis, shall consist of persons who look at every question from a different point of view from that of the popular representatives in the Lower Chamber.

In England, for example, a peer (unless afflicted with the mania of grandeur) does not regard from a standpoint different from that of his lawyer or of his tailor, from that of a professor or of a stockbroker, questions relating to the powers of the Crown, to the fiscal system, or to public education. He has his individual views on these subjects; but they are not class views, excepting in the sense of being those of the so-called "comfortable" class from which the Lower House is recruited almost as exclusively as the Upper. His opinions on public questions are not steeped in the prejudices of a limited order, as were those of the French nobles of the Old Régime, who held themselves to be of a different race from the Third Estate, but who, it should not be forgotten, were not entrusted with political power. It is probable that in England, if the places of the present members of the House of Lords were taken by five hundred other rate-payers chosen from the Stock-Exchange, from Lincoln's Inn, from Bond Street, and from Oxford, and invested with the same powers as the hereditary peers, the course of legislation would undergo no change. In the great modern communities of the world, the most interesting in their development, in England and in France, in the United States and in the British Colonies, whether the constitution be new or old, monarchical or republican, there are only two social classes: that which gains a livelihood by manual toil, and that which earns a living in other ways, or subsists on the interest of capital. The only possible conception therefore of two Chambers regarding legislative questions *ab initio* from

different points of view is that of an Upper House representing the bourgeois element (in the sense of the word as used by the French Socialists), and of a Lower Chamber delegated entirely by wage-earners. Such a system could never be started on honest lines, and, if started, it could never be worked. Hence the makers of new constitutions are, in the formation of Second Chambers, faced by invincible difficulties. It passes the wit of man to construct a Second Chamber which shall be effective in checking the popular assembly, and have some logical basis for its foundation. Therefore a community possessing by inheritance such an institution would be rash to try to transform it on the ground that it is approved less by the rational faculty than by the traditional instinct of the nation.

The doctrinaires who had been brought up on the principles of 1789, tempered by admiration for the British Constitution, did not hesitate to say in the National Assembly that only two bases were possible for a legislature —election and heredity. As even the Legitimists did not hint that the latter could possibly be established in France, it behooved the old Republicans to combat the system of a nominated Senate. The scorn with which the mob of 1848 treated the Chamber of Peers showed that such a body would only irritate the democracy if it escaped its contempt, without being a defence of the Constitution. When the Assembly, essaying to conciliate conflicting views, proposed that one-third of the Second Chamber should be appointed by the President, Marshal MacMahon refused to have anything to do with the naming of the new senators. He would be bound to nominate Reactionaries, and he knew that they who had achieved nothing with the complete control in their hands of an

absolute single Chamber, would not become less inept because an Upper House was packed with them, and that the President, if he accepted the right of nomination, would be identified with the performances of his nominees. Consequently the nomination of the irremovable senators (reduced to one-fourth of the whole number) devolved at first on the National Assembly, and from its dissolution until 1884, when the elective system was extended to the entire body, the Senate itself filled vacancies which occurred among its nominated members.

The example of England not being imitable, the American model of a Second Chamber was cited with a curious misapprehension of its structure. M. Waddington, who was not a doctrinaire of the Revolution, but an Englishman by origin and by education, proposed that the Senate should be elected by the conseils-généraux and the conseils d'arrondissement of the departments on the analogy of the election of the American Senate by the State Legislatures of the Union.[1] It is surprising that a statesman of unusually wide knowledge, who, moreover, had close relations with America, should have suggested an analogy between the local governing bodies of the centralised French departments and the legislatures of the sovereign states of the Federal Union. His scheme was rejected on the ground that, members of the conseils d'arrondissement being more numerous in each department than those of the more important conseils-généraux, the Senate would

[1] "M. Waddington a proposé de donner l'élection des sénateurs aux conseillers généraux et aux conseillers d'arrondissement. Il a voulu se rapprocher ainsi du système d'élection du Sénat Fédéral des États-Unis élu par les membres des deux chambres de chaque État." Rapport fait à l'Assemblée Nationale au nom de la Commission des Lois constitutionnelles, 22 Février, 1875.

under it be nominated by the district[1] councillors, who for the most part are insignificant persons, elected to perform insignificant functions. The principle of indirect election was, however, accepted, and the electoral colleges were constituted on the lines on which, with certain modifications, they still subsist, the senatorial electors of each department being the deputies, the members of the conseil-général and of the conseils d'arrondissement, and a delegation chosen by each municipal council.[2]

II

Before considering the working of the Senate as constituted by the law of 1875 with the amendments of 1884, it will be useful to glance at some of the alternative schemes proposed to the National Assembly. Owing to reasons historical and racial, there are not many points in the French Constitution which can be utilised by Englishmen as examples or as warnings. But the creation of a Second Chamber by a constituent assembly, containing the best intelligence of the conservative and democratic elements of a great nation, was fruitful in suggestion; and as the reform of the Upper House of the English Parliament is to amateurs a constant pretext for devising plans of Second Chambers, it may be of interest to see that nearly every idea that has inspired the fancy of our own empirics was

[1] The expression "district councillor" is an accurate equivalent of "conseiller d'arrondissement," and is not a mere adaptation of a modern English term. The arrondissements under the law which first created the department and subdivided it (loi du 22 Décembre, 1789) were called "districts." The original "districts" were, however, somewhat smaller than the actual arrondissements.

[2] Loi organique du 24 Février, 1875.

in some form passed in review by the National Assembly at Versailles.

A Second Chamber must necessarily be hereditary, nominated, or elected, or else composed of elements combined from categories thus formed. As for the hereditary system, it is clearly impracticable to plant it in a new constitution in a democratic state. The system of nomination, when not exercised by the Chief of the State, is not easy to distinguish from certain forms of indirect election. For example, the senators nominated by the French Senate from 1876 to 1884 were certainly chosen by indirect popular election. Nomination by an elective Chief of the Executive whose term of office is limited may also be considered as a species of indirect election; and the members of an electoral college appointed to choose a President of a Republic invested with the power of nominating legislators would, in casting their votes, undoubtedly give weight to the fact that they were choosing not only a Chief of the Executive, but a Grand Elector, delegated by them to name legislative representatives. Indeed, excepting in an autocracy, like the Second Empire, the absolute power of nomination scarcely exists. But without straining so far the signification of terms, it will be convenient to define nomination as appointment by the Chief of the State on the advice of Ministers.

The possible forms of election of a Second Chamber are manifold. It may be direct or indirect. It may be based on the same suffrage as that ordained for the Lower Chamber, or on a more limited franchise. Or the qualifications and disqualifications may be applied not to the electors, but to the elected; in which case the electorate is restricted to choose its representatives from

definite categories of citizens — from those, for instance, who have passed a certain limit of age, or who pay a certain amount of tax, or who belong to certain constituted bodies. Moreover there are forms of election which can only be applied to peculiar constitutions. For example, the American Senate is based on the Federal Constitution of the United States, and we have seen how vain was the talk of modelling the French Senate on the American lines on the pretence that the administrative divisions, called departments, with their centrally controlled local governing bodies, had any analogy with federated states and their sovereign legislatures. In the same way it would be necessary to federate the British Isles or the British Empire before the pattern of the United States could be of service to improvers of the British Constitution.

All the other systems were passed in review by the French constituent legislators of 1875. The idea of choosing the Senate by direct election based on a restricted franchise only aroused memories of the unpopular Lower Chamber of the Monarchy of July elected on this principle. In England, certain reformers of the House of Lords might like to see in the place of that assembly a body resembling the House of Commons of Lord Palmerston's time. Its legislative accomplishments would probably not differ from those of the present Upper House; but by adding to the chaos of British electoral franchises, and by further complicating the registration laws, its establishment would do little more than increase the painstaking class which subsists on the revision of voters — a result which perhaps might not compensate for the destruction of the British Constitu-

tion. Increased employment to officials and politicians would similarly arise from the adoption of the plan, discussed by the National Assembly, of having senatorial electors chosen periodically by the electors entitled to vote for members of the Lower House. It was proposed that one delegate should be chosen by each hundred primary electors.[1] The proposition was rejected on the ground that as the senatorial electors would have no other function than that of meeting at long intervals to choose the senators of the department, the anxiety of ordinary citizens to occupy the post would be so faint that the electoral colleges would be filled entirely with professional politicians.

Other projects laid before the National Assembly bear resemblance to some of those put forward by reformers of the House of Lords in a "conservative" sense. Amateur constitution-makers, both in countries where national vicissitude requires the creation of new legislatures and in those where the age of institutions tempts the temerity of reformers, find attractive the theory of forming a Second Chamber out of the notables of the nation. They urge that for the purpose of checking the proceedings of a popular house of representatives no assembly could be better fitted than one composed of citizens or subjects who have arrived at the highest eminence in their respective professions. They have no precedents to encourage them. Fanciful analogies from antiquity sometimes occur to them, but the history of parliamentary institutions

[1] Proposition Vautrain. In large communes containing over 800 electors it was proposed that the votes should be divided into sections of from 400 to 800, so that no "primary elector" should have a voice in the choice of more than eight "electors of the second degree."

affords them no aid. It is quite possible that the lists they draw up contain the materials of chambers as effective as any Senate or House of Peers of modern times: they nevertheless suggest, rather than the idea of a legislature, a catalogue of the distinguished company at a public funeral in France, or in England, where interments are a less favourite national pastime,[1] at the laying of a foundation-stone by a royal personage.

Two alternative methods are proposed for the calling into being of such an Assembly; either the right to sit in it must be conferred *ex-officio* on the holders of certain defined situations, or it must be chosen by popular suffrage from restricted categories of citizens. The most familiar suggestion, according to the first method, is that made by English reformers who desire to see religious bodies other than the Anglican Church officially represented in the House of Peers. They only perceive the anomaly of special representation in the Upper Chamber of the clergy of one religious body which is not even established in two portions of the kingdom: they ignore or misapprehend the historical reason for the presence of the bishops in the legislature, which dates from a period when one religion was professed by the entire people, and the sacerdotal caste was an estate of the realm.[2] To

[1] In France funerals of celebrities are looked upon almost as gala ceremonies. For example, it was officially announced that M. Brisson, President of the Chamber of Deputies, was unable to attend the obsequies of his predecessor, M. Floquet, owing to his being in mourning for a relative who had died several weeks previously (January, 1896).

[2] I suppose that there is little doubt that the inferior clergy of the Church of England, save those who are hereditary peers, as well as those members of the Episcopate who are not Lords of Parliament, are now members of the Third Estate, as, in spite of the disability of clerks to sit in the House of Commons, they have the right to vote at elections of representatives of the Third Estate.

carry out their suggestion consistently, either the Lords Spiritual must be abolished, which would be the destruction of the Constitution, and therefore a revolutionary measure; or the other representatives of religious bodies, although appointed also in their capacity of agents of the unseen, must be invidiously labelled as Temporal Peers.

When we descend from the general principle to examine particular suggestions the example of France is of some service in indicating difficulties. A favourite proposal is that the president of the Wesleyan Conference and the corresponding officers of other important sects should have seats in the House of Lords. No doubt the stirring eloquence of those divines would enliven its debates; but how are we to get them there? In France, if the National Assembly had voted an extension of the principle adopted by the Second Empire whereby the Cardinals sat in the Senate, there would have been no difficulty whatever in giving official representation to all the religious communities of the land, because each of them, Catholic, Protestant, and Hebrew, including practically the entire French nation, is a "constituted body." In the United Kingdom, outside the Anglican Church, the only religious organisation which is a constituted body in the French sense of that phrase is the Church of Scotland, and there is no means of recognising, for the purpose of giving them power to send delegates to a legislature, either the great dissenting sects or even the original mother church of the three kingdoms, the Roman communion, except by some impracticable scheme of concurrent establishment. The constitutional Act creating the new Upper House might arbitrarily provide that the half dozen denominations owning the largest number of buildings registered for

worship should send to it representatives; or, as that would provoke the erection of "faggot" conventicles, it might institute a competitive religious census. It is clear that only the most numerous bodies could be represented, as if each of the 250 sects certified to the Registrar-General were to nominate a peer there would not be much room in the gilded chamber for the field-marshals and county councillors, with whom the reformers intend to complete the assembly. But that necessary restriction would be likely to provoke more emulation and strife than the ancient anomalies which have come down from the Plantagenets. The dwindling Quakers, with their wealth and historical tradition, would deem themselves as worthy of representation as the multiplying Methodists; and the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion would regard its noble origin as a more appropriate claim than the legions of the Salvation Army.

In France, where the sectarian spirit when it exists does not take the form of diversified creed, all the religious persuasions, except the infinitesimal, are recognised by the State as constituted bodies. In England, the Seventh Day Adventists or the Irvingites are in the same legal position as the great communities which in numbers rival the Established Church; but in France Père Hyacinthe's congregation, or the survivors of the anti-concordatary Catholics of the Deux Sèvres, are not in the same position as the Confession of Augsbourg and the Reformed Church, although those Protestant denominations are relatively of less importance by the side of the Catholic Church than are the Wesleyans with regard to the Church of England. Consequently it would not be impracticable in France to make a seat in the Senate

the complement of high office in all religious bodies of importance. This was a feature in the first scheme recommended by the Commission of the National Assembly,[1] which was subsequently renounced as too artificial and complicated.

The Assembly also took into consideration an analogous scheme proposed by M. Bardoux, a moderate Republican, to the effect that the Senate should be elected by universal suffrage, the choice of the electors being confined to persons who had attained the age of forty, and who belonged to one of sixteen categories.[2] It may be useful to glance at those conditions of eligibility to see if they could be used for a reformed Upper Chamber in England. Three of the categories were ecclesiastical — the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the high officials of the Protestant and Jewish communities. The others included the members of the Lower Chamber; members of

[1] The elaborate scheme of the Commission des Trente is worth studying by admirers of paper constitutions. Half of the senators were to be appointed by the Chief of the Executive, the other 150 to be chosen by specially constituted electoral colleges. From the 150 senators named by decree of the President were to be deducted a small number of *ex-officio* senators (sénateurs de droit) — the Cardinals, Marshals, and Admirals, one or two of the highest judges, and five members of the Institute selected by that body. The remainder of the nominated half of the Senate was to be chosen by the President from the Catholic hierarchy, the high officials of the Augsbourg Confession, the Reformed Church, and the Jewish community, from the ambassadors, generals, governors of colonies, judges of the High Court, members of the National Assembly, members of the Institute, etc. The electoral colleges for the elective senators were to be composed of voters qualified by franchises of a dozen descriptions, all more or less complex (*Annales de l'Assemblée Nationale*, T. 34 Annexes).

[2] Ass. Nat. Séance du 12 Février, 1875. This scheme was a revival of one proposed by M. Dufaure when Vice-President of the Council in May, 1873, under M. Thiers, just before the resignation of the latter.

former legislative and constituent assemblies (the latter qualification serving to remind that this was the fourteenth Constitution constructed in France in the lifetime of men then surviving); members of the conseils-généraux; persons who had held the office of cabinet minister or ambassador; certain ranks of the magistracy; members of the Institute; marshals, admirals, and generals; the governors of the colonies; the mayors of towns having 30,000 inhabitants; certain officials of the University and of the Bank of France, and the presidents of the Chambers of Commerce. Now half these "eligibilities," which are ready to hand in France, have no official existence in England. The Catholic Archbishop of Paris and the Protestant President of the Consistory are functionaries dependent on the Ministry of Public Worship, the former being practically chosen by the government; in England the office of a Roman Catholic bishop is not recognised by the State, and he holds his appointment from a foreign potentate,[1] while the status of the president of the Wesleyan Conference would be as difficult to put into an Act of Parliament as that of the president of the Marylebone Cricket Club. The presidents of the French Chambers of Commerce are likewise persons of legally defined powers subject to a department of the State, while the president of an English Chamber of Commerce, however

[1] The mode of appointment of French bishops under the Concordat will be dealt with elsewhere. In England, when on the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, in 1884, Cardinal Manning was given precedence immediately after the Prince of Wales and before several peers of various rank, the Home Office, while according him this high place, the result of a private arrangement, refused to recognise his title of archbishop; and so, in the Commission under the Queen's sign-manual, he was called Cardinal and Doctor in Divinity without any reference whatever to his episcopate.

important, is in the eye of the law simply the chairman of a private enterprise, like a choral association or an angling society. The Institute of France, with its limited Academies, has no counterpart in the learned and artistic corporations of our country; and the officials of the University all hold their posts under the Ministry of Education. These categories, from which senators might conveniently be chosen, no doubt comprehended most of the capacities in France, brilliant or business-like; they moreover were ready-made portions of the governmental machine, and every person included in them had his appointed place defined by code or by statute. They also represented the classes aptest to control democratic excess. Yet the constituent Assembly, with a Conservative majority, which regarded the creation of a Senate as a check to democracy, treated this and similar schemes as the House of Commons treated Mr. Disraeli's fancy franchises in 1867. If then the most experienced opinion considered artificial such qualifications for senatorship in a country where they formed part of the national economy, and where a Second Chamber had to be invented, some idea may be formed of the primary difficulties likely to attend any attempt to establish, in a land unused to new constitutions, an order of legislators whose qualifications would have for the most part to be manufactured.

It would repay few political students to read from beginning to end, as it has been my duty, the debates in the National Assembly of three sessions and the reports of its commissions on the organisation of the Senate, excepting for one purpose. The interminable series of discourses, many both eloquent and full of information, the profound and elaborate reports, the

divisions of the Assembly sometimes inconclusive and sometimes contradictory, all display the colossal difficulty of creating a new Second Chamber, even under the most favourable circumstances with the aid of the expertest talent. They are a warning to all reformers, whether styled Radical or Conservative, who would mend and improve a venerable institution, or would sweep it away to erect in its place a modern edifice. Whether the abolition or the reform of the House of Lords would be the rasher proceeding this is not the place to discuss. It has been said that conscientious architects and restorers have worked more havoc among the ancient monuments of art in England than the incendiaries of the Revolution ever did in France, and a deep truth lies both in the statement and in its application.

III

After two years of hesitancy and negotiation the Constitutional Law organising the Senate was voted on February 24, 1875. Of the 300 senators 75 were to be nominated and irremovable, the National Assembly making the first selection before its own dissolution. The others (excepting seven assigned to Algeria and the colonies) were to be elected by the departments, the number of senators allotted to each being determined by population. The electoral college within each department was formed of the deputies, the members of the conseils-généraux and of the conseils d'arrondissement, and the delegates of the municipal councils. The nominated element was afterwards abolished; but as the electoral colleges are still recruited from the same categories

it may be well to consider for a moment if a system which, with some modification, has survived for over twenty years in France, could serve as a model for the constitution of a Second Chamber in England. If the county were taken as the electoral area corresponding to the department (the colonies being left out of the question, as no comparison can be instituted between the possessions abroad of England and of France), there would be no difficulty in providing the first three classes of electors, as members of Parliament, county councillors and district councillors sufficiently resemble deputies, conseillers généraux, and conseillers d'arrondissement, to serve the purpose of supplying a small proportion of the senatorial electors. But when we get to the municipal councils then the radical difference between French and English organisation becomes apparent; for all our future reforms of local government will not in half a century map out the whole of the United Kingdom into communes with no conflict of jurisdiction or confusion of areas.

Five-sixths of the electors of the Senate were the nominees of the communes, for each of the 36,000 municipalities, large or small, chose one senatorial elector, and the deputies, conseillers-généraux, and conseillers d'arrondissement all united only numbered about 7000. Gambetta described the new Senate as "the grand council of the communes of France,"[1] and in 1884 the expression grew in force, when an end was put to the nomination of senators, and the number of municipal delegates was increased by a larger representation being accorded to the more populous communes. The phrase I shall have

[1] Discours de Belleville, 23 Août, 1875.

to criticise, but its use, accurate or rhetorical, displays the importance of the commune as an electoral basis; and as every foot of French soil, rural as well as urban, is subject to a municipal council, it would be useless to consider if a Second Chamber, constructed on the lines of the French Senate, could ever be established in a country not administered on the communal system.

The Reactionaries failed to take advantage of that provision of the senatorial law which was the chief work of their majority in the National Assembly. It was they who had insisted on having a nominated element in the Senate, and the Republicans accepted as inevitable the prospect of being for years in a minority after the nomination of a large body of Monarchists, who would thus be senators for life, though the opinion of the country receded from them. Even the sanguine Gambetta only ventured to predict that no Imperialists would be selected. To the stupefaction of all parties, such were the jealousies among the Reactionaries, the Legitimists outvying the Bonapartists in their hatred of the Orleanists, that of the 75 irremovable senators appointed for life by the Assembly, in which the Republicans were in a minority, only 18 Monarchists of all shades were nominated.[1] The remaining 57 were Republicans: their superior dexterity in the transaction would have been vain without the prodigious folly of the Reactionaries, who, it should be said, have, ever since the War, acted with perfect consistency when any call has been made on their intelligence, or even on their primitive instinct of

[1] December, 1875. There were 15 Royalists, Orleanists, and Bonapartists, and 5 "Constitutionnels," all of whom could not be counted under the circumstances as Monarchists.

self-preservation. Thus the reactionary institution of irremovable senators, by the maladroitness of the Reactionaries, saved the Republicans from being in a woful minority in the Upper Chamber, for at the first senatorial elections they were beaten in the country.[1] In the new Chamber,[2] however, the Republicans were twice as numerous as the combined groups of all their opponents.

The Senate had the right of filling vacancies among its irremovable members, and for the first which occurred,[3] M. Buffet was chosen by a majority of two, the Monarchical leader having been rejected at the elections for both Houses. For using their slender majority to nominate one who had been defeated at the polls, the Reactionaries were adversely criticised by the Republicans; though the chief use of the co-optative power given to an elective assembly is to secure the presence of eminent men who could not enter it by other means. The closeness of this party vote showed that Republican senators were prepared to fight for the Republic. Nevertheless an incident soon occurred, which, looked at after the lapse of years, seems to support the theory that a Second Chamber, after a few months of existence, is fated to inspire all its members, no matter what their origin and prepossessions, with a peculiar spirit opposed to that of their colleagues of the lower branch of the legislature.

A controversy arose between the two Houses on the old question constantly at issue in systems of parliamentary government, as to the right of the Upper Chamber to interfere with the financial proposals of the popular assembly. It turned on the construction of a clause of the new Constitution which provided that all financial legis-

[1] January, 1876. [2] February, 1876. [3] June, 1876.

lation should be in the first instance submitted to the Chamber of Deputies and voted by it.[1] The Senate, which the Constitution had not excluded from all share in financial legislation, had inserted in the Budget Bill an entirely new vote. The champions of the Chamber argued that while the Senate had decidedly the right to reduce a vote in the budget or to reject it altogether, the provision that financial legislation should originate in the Chamber disqualified the Upper House from taking the initiative in money matters. The Senate stood by its assumed rights, nearly five-sixths of its members opposing the pretension of the Chamber; thus showing that ardent combatants for the Republican principle against that of the Monarchy were by the mere membership of a constituted body infected with a spirit of devotion to its privileges, overriding party feeling. Gambetta vigorously sustained the thesis that both the traditions of parliamentary government and reasons of public policy pointed to the sole competence in financial matters of the Chamber which directly represented the nation. The speech was not one of his happiest: the great orator was not strongest in dialectical argument; his quotation of the precedents afforded by all the French Legislatures since the Revolution had the unconvincing air which appeal to precedent always has in France. Hence, while the usually practical leader of the people developed his juridical themes, it fell to the philosopher who was then Prime Minister, M. Jules Simon, to call attention to the prac-

[1] L.C. du 24 Février, 1875, art. 8: "Les lois de finances doivent être en premier lieu présentées à la chambre des députés et votées par elle." The ambiguous wording of this clause has never been amended. (The letters L.C. in the notes signify Loi Constitutionnelle.)

tical consequences of a conflict between the two Chambers. The Republic was only precariously founded on the dissensions of its opponents. A parliamentary deadlock would have been described as anarchy by the Reactionaries, and Marshal MacMahon would have been justified and perhaps successful in making a *coup d'état*, which the union of the Republican party made abortive the following year after the Seize Mai. Consequently the Chamber almost unanimously decided to accept the amendments of the Senate.[1]

During the rest of Marshal MacMahon's presidency, politicians had more serious issues to watch than those which might arise between the two Chambers. The small Reactionary majority in the Senate had no cohesion, and it had disappeared when the Republican régime commenced under M. Grévy in 1879. Henceforth, whenever the Senate came into conflict with the Chamber of Deputies it was at the instance of moderate Republicans, who, now that the Republic was secured, did not wish it to be handed over to the Extreme Left.[2]

In 1881 discord arose between the two Houses. The Chamber had voted Gambetta's favourite project of *scrutin de liste* as the basis for the election of deputies.[3] For *scrutin d'arrondissement*, the system of one-member areas, it substituted as the sole electoral division, the department, each one forming a single constituency, and each elector in it being entitled to vote for as many candidates as the department had deputies allotted to it

[1] December, 1876.

[2] *E.g.* the rejection by the Senate of the anti-clerical "article 7" of the "Lois sur l'enseignement supérieur" (March, 1880), and the modification of terms of amnesty of communards (June, 1880).

[3] May 19, 1881.

according to its population.[1] The Senate opposed the change on constitutional grounds. M. Waddington, in his report upon the bill, asserted that the constitution-makers of 1875 wished to put the members of the two Houses on a footing of equality by prescribing that the deputy should be elected by the universal suffrage of a fraction of the department, whereas the senator chosen by a less authoritative electorate should be the representative of the entire department. He urged that if the elect of universal suffrage became also the departmental delegates, the senators chosen by indirect election would lose prestige. This specious argument reflected the feeling of the Senate, and the essay of *scrutin de liste* was postponed until its chief apologist was dead. Republicans were divided on the question, and the intervention of the Upper Chamber was regarded not as a Reactionary victory but as the triumph of M. Grévy over M. Gambetta.

Thus, less prominent in the thoughts of Republican politicians than the powers of the Senate was the destiny of Gambetta at the elections of 1881, which, however, almost swept the Reactionaries out of the Chamber, and returned a great majority pledged to reform the Upper House. The subsequent defeat of the Ferry Cabinet; the premiership forced inopportunely on Gambetta; his desertion by the robust of the Republicans in his construction of the so-called "Grand Ministère"; the fall of his administration nine weeks later,[2]—these events are familiar to all students of contemporary history, and none have more effectively justified those critics of democratic government who assert that the aim of the Republican

[1] One deputy was allotted for every 70,000 inhabitants.
[2] November, 1881–January, 1882.

system is envy, which condemns excellence to obscurity and exposes aptitude to ostracism. It is certain that the Republicans of the Chamber who drove Gambetta out of office on technical details of constitutional revision, thought less of curbing the pretensions of the too powerful Senate than of checking the ambitions of the too popular leader, to whom many of them owed their political existence.

Gambetta died; and soon afterwards a collision between the Houses caused the fall of two ministries.[1] A manifesto by Prince Napoleon, criticising the Government, moved the Chamber to demand, for the affront of a Bonaparte, the proscription of all the families which had reigned in France. The Liberal senators, who were supported by a few doctrinaire Radicals in the Lower House, repudiated the theory that the Republic should proscribe a certain category of citizens, because the Monarchy of July and the Second Empire had done likewise. The Senate adhered to this principle, so the third ministry which had taken part in the fray ended it by means of a Presidential Decree putting on the retired list the Orleans Princes who were officers in the army; and abstract admirers of the British Constitution had to find consolation in the slight analogy furnished by Mr. Gladstone's Royal Warrant of 1871, wherewith he had nullified the opposition of the Peers to the wishes of the House of Commons.

IV

The reform of the Senate was undertaken in 1884, a phenomenal date in the history of the Third Republic, as

[1] January–February, 1883.

since the system of Cabinets formed by a responsible Minister was adopted, it was the first year which revolved from January to December without a change of government — a prodigy only once again repeated.[1] The Prime Minister, M. Jules Ferry, in introducing the project of revision declared that its purpose was to restore harmony between the two Chambers; but no question on which conflict had arisen was dealt with.[2] The reason was that by the terms of the Constitution the Chamber had no power to force the Senate to join it in Congress, whereby alone constitutional revision could be effected, and could only prevail on that body thus to meet it by agreeing beforehand on the subjects to be discussed. M. Léon Say, while declaring himself in favour of the electoral reform of the Upper House, said that nothing would induce him to vote for a Congress unless it were guaranteed that the financial prerogatives of the Senate should not be brought into discussion,[3] and as the large majority of the Senators of all parties agreed with him, revision

[1] From the nomination of M. Thiers as Chief of the Executive in February, 1871, to his resignation of the Presidency of the Republic in May, 1873, he exercised the functions of President of the Council, M. Dufaure being a permanent Vice-President, and though the ministry on M. Thiers' retirement contained only [illegible] its original members, it never retired as a body. Marshal MacMahon followed the same practice till after the passing of the Constitutional laws of 1875, but with this difference — the nominal Vice-President was in reality Prime Minister, giving his name to the ministry for the time being, and ceasing to be [illegible] when he retired. The second occasion since 1875 on which a government outlasted a whole year from January [illegible] to December [illegible] was in 1891, when the fourth Freycinet Ministry, constituted in March, [illegible] survived till February, 1892. The Melline ministry gave promise of repeating the prodigy when this page was revised in 1897.

[2] Chambre des Députés. Séance du 24 Mai, 1884.

[3] Senat. Séance du 24 [illegible]

would have been indefinitely postponed had the Chamber insisted on pressing that question.

The parliamentary skill of M. Ferry, of which the duration of his ministry for the unparalleled term of two years[1] was to be the monument, saved the situation. He persuaded the Chamber that the question of interest to the country was the electoral reform of the Senate, to secure which it was worth while to sacrifice a trifling matter of intra-parliamentary economy. Consequently, when the Congress met, all that it did affecting the Senate was to withdraw from the Constitutional Law the clauses regulating the election of the Upper Chamber. The Senate agreed that they were of organic rather than of constitutional character, and as the principle of two Chambers was secured by the first article of the Constitution of 1875, it seemed more convenient to put senatorial elections on the same legal footing as those of the Chamber of Deputies.[2]

The history of these proceedings is instructive. It shows how an Upper Chamber, established in a democratic state and elected by a restricted franchise could, at a moment when reactionary forces had shrunk into

[1] February, 1883–March, 1885.

[2] In addition to the withdrawal of their constitutional character from the articles 1 to 7 of the law of February 24, 1875, the Constitutional Law of August 13–14, 1884, contained only three articles: one relative to the limit of time within which the elections and assembling of Parliament should take place in case of dissolution by the President; another enacting that the Republican form of government could never be made the subject of revision, and that members of families which had reigned in France were not eligible for the presidency; and the third repealing a regulation which prescribed public prayers in the churches on the Sunday after the reassembling of Parliament—a symptom of the anti-clerical fever which was at its height under M. Ferry's administrations.

effeteness, when democracy was triumphant, and republican institutions were not discredited, refuse to have its prerogatives infringed at the bidding of a popular House elected by manhood suffrage. That the safeguards of the senatorial position were found in a constitution drawn up by a monarchical assembly makes it more significant, as that fact might have provoked the electorate into a hostile attitude. Nothing of the sort happened; and if in a country prone to revolution the pretensions of a Second Chamber were thus submitted to, it is probable that in calmer communities an Upper House, constructed on quasi-democratic lines, would have, and would exercise with impunity, powers of obstruction such as no ancient and anomalous institution would venture to put forth.

If the French Senate, after preserving its prerogatives untouched, has not obstructed, one reason may be that it has had little to obstruct. Its rejection of laws sent up to it from the Lower House is rare, for, as we shall presently see, the Chamber of Deputies does not conceive that the chief function of a legislature is to legislate. Indeed in this respect the Senate sets a pattern of diligence to the popular assembly, constantly framing projects of public utility which never become law, as the Chamber has no time to deal with them. In 1884 the chief feeling which attended the passing of the new Constitutional Law was one of relief that the French nation, for the first time since it had enjoyed political life, had revised a constitution by pacific means, and this consoled critics who thought the result somewhat slender after three years of controversy.

The reform of the Senate had thus to be accomplished

by ordinary legislative procedure. The most important change in its organisation was the repeal of the clause relating to irremovable senators. In spite of a remarkable speech of M. Scherer, in which he defended with profound philosophy the retention of the irremovable element,[1] the Left Centre abandoned the principle of nomination. The Senators were influenced not only by the opinion in the country adverse to the irremovable system, but also by the fear that if it were retained it would be necessary to accept a scheme whereby the "irremovables" would be nominated by a Congress of the two Houses. The prospect of thus permitting the Chamber of Deputies to interfere with its composition was more repugnant to the Senate than any loss of privilege. This was only a symptom of the mutual jealousy which always exists between Upper and Lower Houses of Legislature: and the more nearly they resemble one another in origin and in character the keener is the antagonism likely to be.

The entire Senate thus became an elective body.[2] The

[1] Sénat: Séance du 4 Novembre, 1884.

[2] The Senate continued to consist of 300 members. The irremovable senators, named by the National Assembly and by the Senate, retained their life appointments, but pending their death or resignation their 75 seats were nominally distributed among the departments according to population. Thus the Seine and the Nord, which under the old law had each five senators, now became entitled to ten and nine respectively, and the representation of all the others, except the ten least populous, was raised proportionately. It was enacted that as each vacancy took place among the irremovables, the department to elect a senator in his place should be decided by lot until all had their full complement — which will not happen this century, as the irremovables are a long-lived race. The rule of 1875 was retained that senators should be elected for nine years, a third of the number being re-elected every three years. The system of the triennial renewal of the House was retained, all the departments

electoral colleges under the new organic law[1] were composed of the same elements as before. The reform consisted in increasing the number of the municipal delegates in proportion to the population of the communes, the smallest continuing to name one senatorial elector apiece, while the largest each sent twenty-four to the electoral college.[2] This corrected to some extent the disproportionate weight given to the rural communes by the National Assembly, but the disproportion was not removed. In the Gironde, for example, the 24 delegates of Bordeaux represent a quarter of a million inhabitants, while among the 550 communes of that vast department there are groups returning 24 delegates which, all combined, have not a fiftieth of the population of Bordeaux.[3] On the other hand, if that city, which contains one-third of the entire population of the Gironde, were to nominate one-third of the municipal delegates, as the influence of a great town always extends beyond its boundaries, it is probable that the majority of the electoral college would

being divided into three series, the senators of each series in its turn all presenting themselves for re-election, no matter whether they had served the whole term of nine years or had only just entered the Senate.

[1] Loi du 9 Décembre, 1884.

[2] The number of councillors in each municipal council is regulated according to the population of the communes by the "Loi du 5 Avril, 1884," the smallest communes, those of under 500 inhabitants, having councils of 10. The organic law enacted that the councils composed of 10 members should elect 1 delegate, those of 12 members 2 delegates, those of 16 members 3 delegates, and so on, up to councils composed of 36 members and over, which should elect 24 delegates. A special provision was made for Paris: its municipal council of 80 members was accorded 30 senatorial delegates.

[3] The 24 smallest communes of the Gironde (which together return 24 delegates) have a united population of 3000, or less than an eightieth of that of Bordeaux.

express the voice of Bordeaux and its dependencies to the extinction of rural representation. Critics of the law of 1884 assert that it has given the preponderance to the little towns, pointing out that while Lyons has only one delegate for every 22,000 inhabitants and Marseilles one for 17,000, the towns of which the population ranges from 3000 to 5000 have one delegate for every 500 inhabitants; the advantage enjoyed by the rural communes under the law of 1875 being transferred to small urban centres. Such criticisms only indicate the difficulty of devising a system of indirect election so as to procure symmetrical representation.

The new law[1] in no wise adjusted the relations of the two Houses, and the old controversy was swiftly renewed on the budget discussed in the Chamber, actually before the reform of the Senate became law. The senatorial elections[2] had further increased the great Republican majority in the Upper House, so its attitude could not be imputed to the Reactionaries, though the subject of discord was the reduction made in the budget of Public Worship by the Chamber, which persevered in the policy of strife-stirring anti-clericalism likely to be associated with the name of M. Jules Ferry long after his remarkable abilities are forgotten. The Senate restored certain votes reduced by the Chamber, tending to straiten the education of the clergy and to diminish their salaries.[3]

[1] Its only other provisions related to the qualifications of senatorial candidates. Members of the families which had reigned in France were made ineligible, as also officers in the army and navy excepting the marshals, the admirals, and certain categories of generals.

[2] January 25, 1885.

[3] In restoring certain votes the Senate laid down the sound principle that it ought not to be competent for Parliament to repeal laws by the

The total rejection of the senatorial amendments was proposed; but the commission of the Chamber appointed to consider them declined to go so far, though it laid down the abstract proposition that the Lower House had the right to finally settle the budget or its being sent back to them without referring it to the Senate a second time. This was a declaration of the complete supremacy of the Chamber in financial matters, begging the whole question at issue. In the end the Chamber accepted one of the inserted votes while the Senate withdrew the others; but the Republican groups of senators who could not be suspected of clerical leanings declared by the mouth of the aged Supplyes Carnot that, while they gave way for reasons of State, in order not to bring public affairs to a deadlock, the rights of the Upper House in matters financial were co-equal with those of the Lower.

It is important to notice the other argument with which the closes was supported. It was the general principle that the supervisory of a Lower Chamber in matters financial is admissible only when it is the sole elective branch of the legislature. It was urged that in under the Second Empire the Senate had to accept the Budget of the Corps Législatif; it was because the former was a nominated body; and that it is the mother of Parliamentary [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

ments, looked up to by all constitutional governments, the House of Commons is paramount in finance, it is because the House of Lords is an hereditary and nominated assembly. Reformers of the English Constitution may be thereby reminded of what might possibly happen if our Upper Chamber were reconstructed. The idea has lost ground that its reform will be demanded by the imperious will of the people formulated by its deputies in the House of Commons. It is more generally believed that the re-edification of the House of Peers, if ever essayed, will be effected on lines traced by its own members. It is inconceivable that an assembly, dignified with centuries of tradition, should voluntarily descend from its venerable place among the legislatures of the world to become the newest of constitutional experiments without substantial compensation. If thus the House of Lords, in becoming a quasi-representative body, secured the right to interfere in matters of finance, the practical consequence would be perpetual strife between the two Chambers, aggravated by undreamed-of powers of obstruction on the part of the remodelled assembly. The historical result would be the transformation of the Upper House of Parliament into an institution less interesting than the improvised legislative council of our youngest colony, while the Commons House would forfeit a privi-

elected Corps Législatif till 1870, when under the Liberal Empire parliamentary reform was talked about. It was then proposed that the Senate and the so-called popular Assembly should be put on the same footing with regard to taxation, but the proposal was withdrawn as it was discovered that by the law they had precisely the same rights; but during the whole reign, which was to end a few months later, no one had had the curiosity to examine the text of the Constitution (Sénat: Séance du 20 Mars, 1885).

lege held for five hundred[1] years, or would only retain it as a maimed and disputed appanage.

The year after the conflict just related saw the advent to office of General Boulanger, who, at first protected by the Radicals, soon became the incarnation of the growing discontent with the Republican régime. It was then that the Senate displayed its conservative character — conservative not in the sense of monarchical, but as representing the middle-class sentiment which in France is always in favour of retaining the existing form of government: whereas the democratic Chamber is more liable to reflect the tendency towards Cæsarism latent in the national character.

As the Boulangist movement began and ended in the interval between two general elections of the Chamber,[2] the action of the Senate was not necessary to save the Republic, its Republican majority never being confronted with a Boulangist majority in the Chamber. It is, however, probable that the existence of the Senate restrained the deputies from adhering to Boulangism in numbers sufficient to make it prevail. The temptation to the ordinary politician was considerable. The bye-elections indicated that if a dissolution took place few candidates, Radical or Reactionary, not labelled as Boulangist, would be returned. The General had been invented by the Radical Revisionists, and in spite of the attachment of the Monarchists to his fortunes he had not ceased to parade his republicanism. Republicans could therefore

[1] In 9 Hen. IV. (1408) the exclusive right of the Commons to originate money bills was laid down as a maxim of parliamentary law. Hallam, *Middle Ages*, [illegible].

[2] At the 1885 elections the existence of General Boulanger was unknown to the nation, and before those of 1889 he had fled the country.

accept his lead without any show of apostasy. In every civic upheaval, especially in countries prone to revolution, there is always a floating body of politicians ready to drift to the winning side. Self-preservation is the strongest of human instincts, and in this case it seemed at one time that the only means for a representative of the people to retain his political existence would be to accept the lead of this soldier of fortune. Thus a number of deputies sufficient to give him a majority in the Chamber[1] might have been induced to go over to him but for the feeling that the Senate stood in the way of any attempt on the Constitution, pending an appeal to the constituencies. The entire body was a solid anti-Boulangist force, for the Republican senators, being independent of the caprices of universal suffrage, had no inducement to repudiate their doctrine and to trifle with plebiscitary enterprises; while the reactionary minority was chiefly composed of Monarchists distressed at the alliance of the Comte de Paris with the General who had driven the Duc d'Aumale from the army.

The Constitutional Law provides that the Senate can be resolved, by a decree of the President in Council, into a court to try any person charged with offences against the security of the State.[2] This power was put into action against General Boulanger and his alleged accom-

[1] Even after the flight of General Boulanger (April, 1889), when his prestige in the country had received a fatal blow, 213 deputies in the Chamber voted against the law regulating the procedure of the High Court for his trial, the majority numbering 309. Fifty of the minority were Republicans, described as Radical-Socialists, or "Boulangistes et députés qui étaient tout prêts à le devenir." The last category, which had been on the increase for a prolonged period, began appreciably to wane from this date (*Année Politique*, Avril, 1889).

[2] L.C. 24 Février, 1875, art. 9; 16 Juillet, 1875, art. 12.

plices, MM. Rochefort and Dillon in 1889. Permission having been obtained of the Chamber to proceed against one of its members,[1] the President of the Republic convoked the Senate in its capacity of a High Court of Justice. The procedure in a French criminal inquiry was followed, including a secret "instruction," conducted by senators, and a public trial presided over by the President of the Senate assisted by the Public Prosecutor. The accused in their absence were condemned almost unanimously,[2] the senators of the Right not taking any part in the judgment, and explaining their abstention by a declaration of incompetence. This concluding scene of the performance, which had occupied France for three years, emphasised the fact that, next to General Boulanger himself, the most formidable obstruction to Boulangism had been the Senate. Whether its resistance to the movement would have availed anything without the assistance of M. Boulanger is another question.

The conflict between the Senate and the Chamber in 1896 need only be mentioned on account of the attitude of the nation to the quarrel. The Senate had reversed several votes of the Chamber, the majority in which for the moment was supporting the Radical ministry of M. Bourgeois. Before the Easter holidays the Upper House had given way on certain points at issue, the Prime Minister with some skill trying to turn the dispute into a constitutional question, and hinting that if the Senate persisted in opposing the popular Chamber a popular uprising might be provoked. However, during the vacation the majority of the departmental councils at their spring session passed resolutions condemning the fiscal policy of

[1] April 4, 1889. [2] August 14, 1889.

the Government. As the members of those bodies are senatorial electors, and are themselves the elect of universal suffrage, they thus indirectly intimated to the Senate that its opposition to the ministry was not contrary to the will of the country, and it took the bold step on reassembling of refusing to discuss the credits for the Madagascar expedition. The spokesman of the chief Republican groups explained that the majority had no intention of withholding the money, but as the Cabinet had clung to office in spite of a thrice-repeated vote of no confidence in the Senate, they intended to bring affairs to a deadlock, to force the ministry into resignation. The Chamber was still in vacation, and it is significant of the working of the parliamentary system in France that the Lower House should give itself longer holidays than the Upper. It was hastily summoned, and the Prime Minister read a fiery declaration from the tribune[1] to the effect that in the interest of business he and his colleagues would resign, but that the people would ask the reason why. The Chamber protested against the action of the Senate by a slender majority: the Bourgeois ministry resigned: M. Méline formed a "moderate" Cabinet to replace it: and the Radical-Socialist journals were full of revolutionary fury for a week — but nothing else occurred. There was no fighting in the streets of Paris, nor even the faintest interest shown in the crisis by the population. Not only was the Senate justified in its attitude by the perfect indifference of the electorate, but the Chamber itself, with that incoherency which characterises French parliamentary proceedings, at once gave a vote of confidence to the new ministry, which it kept in office for an unwontedly long period.

[1] April 23, 1896.

The record of the relations of the two French Chambers during the twenty years after their creation is instructive to students of parliamentary institutions. It shows the power capable of being used in a democracy against an assembly elected on a more popular basis by an Upper House which, composed of practically the same social and political elements as the Lower Chamber, is nevertheless animated with a totally different spirit. We shall, however, see that in its exercise that power is not as effective as it might be.

V

The tendency of the French at all times is to explain and to regard each of their political changes and institutions as the illustration of an idea; from the Revolution, which, being the inevitable result of financial and fiscal disorder, was glorified as the era of human emancipation and fraternity, to the Third Republic, which, being the fortuitous offspring of monarchical disagreements, was treated as the return of the nation to the diluted doctrine of 1792. The French are in many respects a practical people, especially in legislative matters, as their adoption of the codified system attests; but their great Revolution having occurred at an epoch steeped in the theories of philosophers, they have never lost the habit of referring to an idea every phase and function of civic life, even when utilitarian in origin. The lines on which the Senate was constructed in 1875 had no scientific basis. The National Assembly, feeling that time enough had been spent on its constituent work, created a Second Chamber on a model which seemed serviceable, adapting its electo-

rate out of existing organisations. We have seen that Gambetta, who took little part in devising the Senate, described it as the "grand council of the communes"; but that was a skilful adoption by a consummate strategist of an institution which he disliked but was compelled to accept. If the National Assembly had intended to erect a "grand council of the communes," it would not have filled a fourth part of it with nominated irremovables, nor would it have adulterated the produce of the communes with elements taken from the arrondissements and the departments. The Parliament of 1884 put an end to the nomination of senators, but did not withdraw from the electoral colleges the members of the departmental and district councils or the deputies. Nevertheless, such is the determination of the French to see an idea represented in everything of human institution, that a theory exists that the Senate springs from the necessity of having alongside of the Chamber, which represents individuals, a second assembly representing social groups; and that among these groups the only one, by its rooted stability in the land sufficiently solid to be endowed with political representation, is the commune.

The attitude of the communes of France, rural and urban, is one of indifference, both as to the choice of their delegates by the Municipal Council, and as to the Senator selected by those delegates. In the debates of the National Assembly fear was expressed that the nomination of senatorial electors by the communes might turn every municipal council into a "Club," like those redoubtable organisations which, after 1789, made the villages of France centres of revolution;[1] and even now provincial

[1] By the organic law of 1875 Municipal Councils are forbidden to enter

administrators, of the type which does greatest credit to the system of local government, regret that they are thus forced to take cognisance of political divisions. But as a rule the rural municipalities slumberously perform their useful functions with no thought of reviving the Jacobin sodalities which flourished under the Convention. If the senators at the Luxembourg are inspired with their soporific spirit, the result is accidental, for as a matter of fact the communes have little voice in the selection of senators. Their delegates, when they go to the poll, have always to choose between candidates nominated by the deputies of the department or by the active members of the conseil-général. In a somewhat wide acquaintance with French provincial life, I have never been able to ascertain in a commune, whether market-town or hamlet, the names of the delegates at the last senatorial election without special inquiry of the local officials. In the village shop, in the rustic inn, every one knows the mayor and the vice-mayor, while the leader of the "fanfare" is a celebrity, and the captain of the "pompiers" a hero. But one may ask in vain who has been the repository of the spirit of the commune, and sometimes even a blue-bloused colleague of the council-board, if questioned unawares, cannot recall who were the peasant envoys privileged one Sunday to travel at the cost of the department to its capital, and there to vote for senators.[1]

into any discussion before proceeding to the secret ballot of their senatorial delegates.

[1] As a matter of practice, in the small communes nominating only one senatorial elector, the mayor is almost invariably chosen. The formalities prescribed before a delegate can receive his trifling indemnity for travelling expenses are characteristic of the bureaucratic system. A municipal councillor is entitled to half a franc for each kilomètre of the

It is interesting to notice this tendency of the French to graft on to existing institutions, in order to explain their origin and purpose, an idea unconceived by the institution-makers, as the English practice is the exact reverse. There still survive in our country legal functions, judicial and other offices, as well as portions of our constitutional fabric, which owe their origin to ideas forgotten in the mist of ages. The idea is recognised and kept in remembrance only by antiquaries, but the institution founded on it thrives and performs practical functions in the modern state. No instance is more striking than that of the legislative chamber corresponding in the British Constitution to the Senate in the French. Neither the defenders nor the detractors of the House of Lords can refer to its origin as a reason for its preservation, its reform, or its abolition. The respectable clergymen of convivial habits, whose lawn-sleeves illumine the right reverend bench, by no strained comparison can have their position in the nation likened to that of the celibate prelates and abbots of the Middle Ages who represented in the Great Council the then universal Church. Nor have the hereditary peers, whether their ancestors illustrated Tudor statecraft or the commerce of a less picturesque age, anything in common with the feudal order which

double journey between his commune and the capital of the department. At the close of the election he endorses with the claim his letter of convocation, and hands it to the presiding officer, the judge of the local civil tribunal, who verifies it and transmits it to the prefet. The prefet forwards it to the treasurer-general of the department, who signs an order for payment and returns it to the préfet, who then addresses it to the mayor of the commune where the elector resides. The latter receives it from the mayor, and takes it to the tax-assessor of the canton, who at last pays him the money.

in the beginning composed the Second Estate of the realm. Indeed, the idea from which the Lords Spiritual and Lords Temporal derived their origin may be said to have disappeared from England centuries ago, though in France it survived to the Revolution. But the institution founded thereon has outlasted it so long that one of the rifest errors cherished by every class of the English people is to confound the Estates and not to apprehend that two of them are contained in the House of Lords.[1]

It is useful to observe this mental attitude of the two peoples towards their respective institutions, as it may partly explain the failure in France of English importations, such as the parliamentary system. It is also a reason why the working of the French machinery of government does not offer more valuable suggestions for practical application in Anglo-Saxon communities.

If the Senate were in reality Gambetta's "Grand Council of the Communes" expressing the voice of the 36,000 municipalities, rural and urban, it would take a more prominent place in the economy of the Republic; and the reasons why, in spite of its increased representative character, its importance has declined in the working of the constitutional machine, are interesting to examine, as they are not those usually cited as causing a Second Chamber to be overshadowed by a popular Assembly.

If in a legislature we find on the one hand an Upper

[1] "A notion is entertained by many people, and not without the authority of some very respectable names, that the King is one of the three estates of the realm, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal forming together the second, as the Commons in Parliament is the third" (Hallam, *Middle Ages*, c. viii. pt. 3).

House in no sense representative of the people, whether hereditary, nominated, or elected on a high franchise, and on the other a Lower House, chosen by the widest suffrage, in which a solid majority proclaims in distinct tones the decided will of the nation, the presumption arises that the essential condition for the existence of the Second Chamber is that it accept a position subordinate to the popular Assembly. But the French Senate is chosen by the elect of universal suffrage, and the Chamber of Deputies, though directly representing the masses of the population, never contains a majority stable enough to keep a ministry in office for even half the span of a quadrennial parliament. If then the Senate, which always has a compact majority, in general sympathy with the views prevailing in the country, felt that it was supported by the strength of all the communes of France, it is strange that it should not oftener put forth that strength in taking the initiative out of the hands of an Assembly which, though elected by universal suffrage, constantly shows, by its incoherencies, that it is not the mandatory of the definite will of the nation.

There is nothing in the Constitution which prescribes for the Senate a position of inferiority to the Chamber. This was made clear in the discussions on the revision of 1884; but though the Senate then asserted its right to exercise powers coextensive with those of the Chamber, powers which might be very formidable in the hands of an energetic Upper House, it has usually been content with the academic affirmation of a principle.

Perhaps the most curious feature of the relations of the Houses is the indifference of the nation to their contro-

versies. Whether the Senate acts boldly, as in 1896, and upsets a Ministry supported by the Chamber, or whether it attenuates a surrender by making a dignified protest, the population of France looks on unmoved. In 1893, for example, the Ribot Cabinet fell, in consequence of a dispute between the two Chambers on the Budget. The incoming Prime Minister, M. Dupuy, in his long declaration[1] on taking office, did not even mention the cause of the crisis, or that there was any discord between the two Houses; and at the general elections for the Chamber that summer, far from the electorate being asked to pronounce upon the pretensions of the Senate, it may safely be affirmed that not one voter in a thousand was aware that there had been a difference between the two branches of the Legislature.

Of this indifference in matters political, wide-spread among all classes in France, the insignificance of the Senate is a symptom and a reflection. If each of its acts were closely scanned by an electorate jealous of the rights of its direct representatives, if the abolition of the Senate inscribed on the programme of Radical deputies were the rallying cry of a popular agitation, no doubt the potency of the Upper Chamber would be invigorated; for in politics it is more profitable, both for institutions and for men, to be traduced than to be ignored. The term insignificance I do not use in an offensive sense, but as expressing the sentiment of active members of the Senate who regret their corporate self-effacement. They complain, for example, that, without any warrant in the Constitution, it has become an established practice that the Cabinet is responsible only to the Chamber of Deputies; and even if the

[1] April 6, 1893.

Senate were once able to turn out a ministry, its unanimous confidence would not avail to keep a ministry in office in the face of an adverse vote of an improvised majority in the Chamber. As the Republican majority of the Senate, though divided into groups,[1] is essentially governmental in its instincts, it is certain that the average duration of ministries would be longer if their lives were in the hands of the senators, and the government of the country would be less unstable. The tranquil doctrinaires of the Luxembourg console themselves that in leaving the fate of Cabinets to the Lower Chamber they are following the constitutional tradition of the British Parliament: but if it adds to the dignity of an elective Senate thus to be invested with the disabling attributes of an hereditary house, to pursue the comparison further does not enhance the consolation; for while the unrepresentative House of Lords supplies on an average nearly one-half of the members of English Cabinets, in France barely one-fifth of the ministerial portfolios are bestowed on the Senate, grand council of the communes though it be.[2]

[1] The groups of the Senate at the end of the century are the Centre Gauche; the Gauche Républicaine, corresponding with the Opportunists; the Union Républicaine, which might be described as Moderate Radical, and the Gauche Démocratique, which is Radical of a more advanced school. A small Radical-Socialist coterie has also made its appearance. The Reactionaries are too few to be divided into Royalists, Bonapartists, etc.; all are included in the Droite.

[2] Since 1880 the average number of peers in successive English Cabinets, Liberal and Conservative, seems to have been between seven and eight. In the twelve French ministries of the decade since M. Carnot became President in 1887, there have been on an average just two senators in every Cabinet, which, up to 1893, consisted of ten Ministers, and since that date of eleven. The average is raised by M. de Freycinet, who was a Senator, and who remained at the War Office during five ministries. A milder grievance of the Senate is that the Ministerial Declaration, made on the forming of each new government, is never read in the Senate by

The unimportance of the Senate cannot proceed from the superior prestige of the Chamber of Deputies. For reasons to be examined presently the popular Assembly does not stand high in the estimation of the French nation. The causes of the Senate's lack of influence must therefore be looked for within its own composition.

VI

If a legislative body fail to occupy a position of influence in a state, it is either because it lacks members whose qualities inspire admiration and attract support, or because it is not truly representative of great interests or of masses of opinion in the commonwealth. The French Senate, it is to be feared, is afflicted with both these disabilities. If its composition at the end of the century be analysed, it will be found to be not worthy of the French nation. The majority of its members are men of respectable parts, capable of treating with intelligence the public questions of the hour; but they are not the most capable that France contains, and, apart from

the Prime Minister, even though he be a Senator, the Upper House having to be content with the accents of a subordinate colleague. As Ministers, whether senators, deputies, or not members of Parliament at all, have the right to sit in both Chambers during their term of office, this rule has actually had the effect of causing the Ministerial Declaration to be read to the Deputies by a Senator, and to the Senate by a Deputy. This happened when the Loubet ministry was formed in 1892. M. Loubet was a senator, and as Prime Minister he had to quit his own House to read the Declaration at the Palais Bourbon, the only other Senator in the ministry being M. de Freycinet, who had just been turned out as Premier but kept on as Minister of War. As the programme of the new government could not be read by the recently dismissed Prime Minister, it had perforce to be imparted to the Senate by a Deputy, M. Ricard being chosen for the task.

their local renown, they are usually unknown beyond the precincts of the Luxembourg. Now all who have seriously studied legislative systems know how chimerical is the fancy of amateur constitution-makers who imagine Second Chambers filled with brilliant representatives of every human science and calling: but there is a mean between that phantasy and an almost complete exclusion of celebrity and genius from a Senate, especially in a country where men eminent in pursuits conducing to fortify the faculties of legislators not only abound but are conspicuously classed in a great corporation which is the nation's chief pride.

The elected members of the Senate (not counting the survivors of the nominated system who belong to a past order of things) are of about the same number as the members of the Institute of France, than which no modern community has ever contained a body more representative of the national forces of intellect and knowledge. There is no region of the land which has not contributed some of its members, and no social class, from the descendants of the ancient lords of the soil to the peasantry which tills it to-day. There is no political or religious tenet held by Frenchmen which is not illustrated in that company; within it believers in the principle of absolutism are the colleagues of utopian theorists of the Revolution, and the dogmatism of Rome is as welcome there as the boldest negation of freethought. Nor are the members of the Institute, with all their learning, recluses mildewed in the dust of folios. Many of them are brilliant citizens of the world, who have the gift not only of instructing students with their pens, but of moving men with the eloquence of their

tongues — and this is true both of those who are masters of the theories of government and of jurisprudence, and of some of those whose European renown has been won in the gayer arts or the profounder sciences. This being so, it might be thought that the senatorial electors would not unfrequently choose to represent their political views men who had attained the supreme grade that France can confer on intellect.

Of the 260 members of the five Academies which meet in the Palais Mazarin, fifty would not seem to be an excessive number to find among the elected senators at the neighbouring Luxembourg; they would form less than one-fifth of the departmental delegates, and more than 200 places would be left for the representatives of industry, agriculture, the army, and interests of purely local order. But if the lists of the Senate be examined, membership of the Institute of France seems to be regarded as an absolute disqualification at the end of the century, for of the elected senators only three belong to the Institute. It may be thought that the departments do wisely in not sending to the Senate a horde of professors to legislate for them. No doubt the prospect of fifty lecturers from Oxford or from Glasgow sitting in a British house of legislature would strike their possible colleagues and the public with alarm. But the members of the Institute, excepting a minority specially engaged in teaching, are neither professors nor tainted with professorial failings, nor are they imbued with that local tint which colours all that comes forth from isolated seats of learning. Moreover, the electoral colleges, in shunning the Institute, do not give the preference to persons who have developed the commerce of the department, or

improved its cultivation, or in any way added to its riches or repute. In most cases the elected senators are second-rate exponents of the callings practised in perfection by the members of the Institute.

The benches of the Senate have, under the Republic, never been adorned by M. Pasteur,[1] M. Taine, or M. Renan; but they swarm with country doctors, with publicists unknown to fame, and with minor prophets of free-thought; while one seeks in vain for the authorities who make the civilised world look to the dome of the Institute for instruction in many a branch of legislative and economic science, in the principles of colonisation, and in jurisprudence, though there are few departments which do not send to the Luxembourg a provincial lawyer, a doctor, or a journalist. If I have mentioned the absence from the elected Senate of members of the Institute, it is because that body contains so many of the choicest intellects of special qualifications that an assembly which is rarely recruited from it cannot command a lofty position in the commonwealth. It must not be thought that the members of the five Academies are disqualified by reason of their reactionary opinions; and when, in 1895, the Radicals for the first time formed a homogeneous Cabinet, it was an irremovable senator, and an eminent Member of the Institute, M. Berthelot, who was selected to represent the Extreme Left before Europe as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

If the roll of elected senators be examined, it is remarkable how few of the names convey any idea, even to Frenchmen who take interest in politics. It is to be

[1] M. Pasteur was nominated Senator under the Empire shortly before the war.

feared that the names even of old Ministers must be included in that unrecognised category. There are about a score of them among the elected senators at the Luxembourg. A stranger might think that an assembly containing so many persons who had directed the affairs of their country would exercise a certain authority in the minds of men, but, unhappily for France, the career of politics does not now cover with glory those who pursue it even with success. It may be affirmed that since the death of Gambetta, himself an example of the ungratefulness of the trade of politician, no one who has become conspicuous as a Minister has gained the lasting esteem of his countrymen. Whether any have deserved it is another question.

The most striking instance of political success provoking public disfavour was that of M. Jules Ferry. The very fact of his evincing statesmanlike qualities, rarely developed under the Third Republic, seemed to bring down upon him the rancour, not of the clerical Reactionaries to whom he had given just cause for resentment, but of a large section of his fellow-republicans, who pursued him from power with a fury as vindictive as though he had been the enemy of his country. Rejected by popular suffrage in his native Vosges, he took refuge in the Senate, where his election to the Presidency, the second post of dignity in the Republic, would have seemed to compensate years of ostracism had not death struck him on the morrow of his taking possession of the chair, thus ending with fatal consistency a career which well displayed the vanity of human ambition. His kinsman, M. Floquet, long deputy for the turbulent quarter of Paris where the hostages were shot by the Commune,

with which uprising he was reputed to sympathise, likewise sought a senator's seat on which to end his days when discarded by electors who certainly had not given him their confidence in the belief that he was an upholder of Second Chambers.

The upward flight of MM. Ferry and Floquet has been reversed by other politicians; for the Senate differs from other superior stages of existence, both celestial and terrene, in that those who have been elevated thither may return to the nether world of universal suffrage. Thus M. Goblet, who for more than five months was Prime Minister of France, was beaten at Amiens, where he was a magnate of note, by a Boulangist stranger; but the asylum he obtained in the Luxembourg did not, in the words of the inspired biographer of the Chamber of Deputies, content his feverish activity, and after three years in that calm atmosphere he was sent back to the Palais Bourbon as Radical Socialist member for Paris. There was a much more eminent senator who descended to the Lower House without previous experience of its attractions. M. Léon Say had sat for thirteen years in the Senate, ever since its creation, in which he had taken no small part; he had been its President in the interval between his embassy to London and his seventh tenure of the portfolio of finance. His defection to seek a seat in the popular House, which contained but a small group in sympathy with his opinions, at a period when there was no prospect of a statesman of his type ever being included in a ministry, testified that, though the Chamber did not stand high in the eyes of the nation, it was better for a solitary voice of authority to be raised sometimes amid its turmoil than to grow faint in the stagnant air of the Senate.

The stagnancy of the Senate is a curious phenomenon, when it is considered that that quality has become manifest only since its nominated element has ceased to be renewed. It is interesting to notice that Gambetta was, on the eve of his death, in favour of retaining the system of nomination, and Republicans, who object to it on principle, acknowledge that while it lasted the Upper House contained much of the best talent of France, and was worthier of a great nation than now. At that period the roll of elected senators too contained some of the most eminent names in France. When the Senate commenced its career in 1876, its nominated section included Mgr. Dupanloup, Generals Changarnier and Chanzy, MM. Littré, Hippolyte Carnot, Casimir-Périer (père), Schérer, Lanfrey, Barthélemy St. Hilaire, and Jules Simon; but there were elected members not less distinguished, such as MM. Thiers, Victor Hugo, Jules Favre, Henri Martin, Waddington, de Broglie, Léon Say, and Marshal Canrobert; whereas, at present, but for the aged relics of the nominated element the benches of the Senate would be almost destitute of celebrity.

There are various reasons for the decadence of type of elected senators. In the first place, Frenchmen as illustrious as MM. Thiers and Victor Hugo, if any survive, no longer take part in politics. Secondly, the spread of Republicanism has reduced the number of departments open to monarchical senators, and as those which have remained anti-republican prefer to elect local personages, it is impossible for the rare Reactionaries of distinction, like the Duc de Broglie,[1] to find a constituency. Again,

[1] The Duc de Broglie was senator for the Eure from 1876 to 1885. At the elections in the latter year, when he was defeated, more than half of

the antipathy prevalent in political France for conspicuous ability has infected the Republican electoral colleges. The rejection of M. Waddington, shortly before his death, by the Aisne, where he was President of the Conseil-Général, in favour of an obscure person, was chiefly due to this, and such treatment of the most accomplished servants of the Republic does not elevate the standard of legislative candidates. Finally, there is the phenomenon observed in all assemblies of recent creation in all communities. When an elective body, local or national, is new, it attracts the ablest and most prominent; but having none of the prestige of tradition, when the novelty is dimmed the better class shrink from the irksomeness of contest, leaving functions, no matter how important, to be competed for by less capable hands.

A brief review of a senatorial election throws considerable light on the composition of the Upper House. We will not take an extreme case, but will examine one which resulted in the election of an unusually distinguished senator. The department is chiefly agricultural, containing one large industrial town. The population is 300,000, and its character is so Republican that the Reactionaries rarely contest a seat for either Chamber. The candidates for the vacant senatorship are therefore all Republicans of not very diverse hues. It might be thought that as party conflicts were in abeyance here, the rivalry would be between the manufacturing interests of the chief-town and the corn-growers and stock-raisers of the rural districts; or that the contest would be fought on free trade and protection as the department is on the

the monarchical seats which then fell vacant (22 out of 42) were filled by Republicans.

frontier; but nothing of the sort is suggested in the vague and lengthy election addresses of the five candidates. The first is a retired notary and mayor of a picturesque village who employs his leisure in contributing to a local Radical journal. The second, also a lawyer, practises in the chief-town, where he is mayor, in which capacity he was decorated: like his rural rival he calls himself a Radical. The third is a village doctor, a freemason of rank, supported by the deputy of his arrondissement. The fourth is another active freemason, a professor who lives in Paris, patronised by one of the senators of the department, as well as by the deputy of the district in which he has a small property. The fifth is a doctor of the chief-town, popular among his patients of all opinions, and so has the support of the Reactionaries, who have no candidate of their own. Four of the five are members of the conseil-général, the professor being its vice-president, and the last three call themselves Republican without the qualification of Radical. The senatorial delegates number nearly 900, and almost all are present at the election. At the first ballot the professor and the two doctors obtain about 200 votes apiece, distancing the two lawyers, who are beaten. Before the second ballot a private transaction takes place, as is usual at these elections. The supporters of one of the doctors go over to the professor, who is thus proclaimed senator.[1]

The callings of these candidates corroborate what has

[1] In senatorial elections, at the first two ballots a candidate to be elected must receive an absolute majority of the votes present, which must be not less than a quarter of the entire roll of senatorial electors; but at the third ballot, if one be necessary, a relative majority decides the election (*Loi Organique*, 2 Août, 1875, art. 15).

been said as to the Senate being filled with minor followers of the occupations pursued with distinction by members of the Institute of France. One reason for the abundance of that class is that the chief electoral influence in a department is the conseil-general; and in the cases where a local deputy is not chosen to fill a senatorial vacancy, the most favoured candidates are usually members of the departmental council, on which professional men abound. They are naturally provincial practitioners, residing in the district which they represent on the council, and thus it comes to pass that the Senate is almost entirely composed of local celebrities, lawyers and doctors predominating.[1]

The French lawyers elected to the Senate are with a few exceptions elderly men who have lived and practised in the provinces, and who, when they migrate to Paris, have no more chance of ever holding a brief at the Palace if they are barristers than they have of transferring their offices and their clients to the metropolis if they are notaries. They therefore in a sense represent regional interests, and being usually small proprietors claim to be regarded as representatives of agriculture. This is true also of the country doctors sent to the Luxembourg; but both classes, when they come to reside in Paris for nine

[1] After the senatorial elections in 1897 more than two-thirds of the assembly was composed of lawyers, doctors, professors, and journalists; the lawyers numbering about a hundred and the medical practitioners about forty. Of 240 senators representing the provinces (not including the members for Paris and the colonies, or the surviving "irremovables"), all but a dozen belonged by birth, long residence, or occupation to the departments for which they sat, and nearly 200 of them were actually natives of the departments which elected them. This shows that however unsatisfactory the composition of the Senate may be, it might be worse if it were filled with "carpet-baggers" from the capital.

months of the year, become strangers to bucolic science and to the needs of the provinces. They have likewise to abandon their professional income, which indeed rarely exceeds the senator's salary of 9000 francs; but as living is dear in Paris the change is not lucrative, and many a senator, who throve upon the lawsuits or the ailments of his rural neighbours, finds that, even with the aid of his savings or his wife's dowry, existence is a struggle on a fourth floor in the Latin quarter. For this reason the few are better off who, like the professor in the election just cited, have some calling in the capital, as to them the senatorial stipend is unalloyed profit.

When a senator is a member of the conseil-général of his department, to which fact he very often owes his seat, attendance at its sessions takes him into his constituency at Easter, and at the Assumption, and if he have retained his home in the region he will spend there the summer vacation. Otherwise he will become completely Parisian, but usually a Parisian who has conquered the capital too late in life; for there are many of these senators, who, unless they were previously deputies, or at an earlier period of life were students of law or medicine, have never lived in Paris. Therefore, migrating thither when ways of thought and habits are stereotyped (for the average age of the senators is sixty-three), they have no other occupation or interest in life than their unagitating duties at the Luxembourg.

A marked defect in the composition of the Senate is the absence of proper representation of the commercial and industrial interests of the country. Of 300 senators only forty are in any way connected with commerce or industry, and to arrive at that small number bankers on

the one hand and retired shopkeepers on the other have to be counted. We shall further examine the rarity of this class in the legislature in dealing with the Lower Chamber. It need only be said here that the employers of labour and the merchants in the commercial and industrial centres of provincial France impress a stranger as being men of practical character and cultivated intelligence peculiarly appropriate to senatorial dignity; it is therefore unfortunate that, in an Assembly where their weight and experience would be of value, their proper places should be filled by a crowd of obscure professional men.

It is easy to see how an Assembly, composed in increasing measure of such elements, is without great authority in the nation. It is not merely power, genius, and eloquence which are wanting; but country lawyers and doctors, who have grown gray within a provincial horizon, have not as a rule adequate experience of men and of affairs to make them shine in a legislative body. The lawyers have not the fault, imputed to Englishmen of the same class, of speaking from a brief without conviction; their failing is rather to pose as theoretical jurists, and the painstaking essays, which they deliver from the tribune, are perhaps better fitted to stir the applause of a congress of advocates at the seat of a provincial Court of Appeal, than to raise the practical renown of the Senate. Moreover, the term for which senators are elected is nine years; and an elderly man, who has broken with the associations of his past to come and live in the great centralising city, which has ever absorbed all the strength and feeling of local life, difficult though it be for him to become a Parisian in his

declining days, is not likely to struggle to assert himself as the mouthpiece of the communes, when he knows it to be humanly improbable that he will have to account more than once to his constituents. Thus it is that Senators, both those who have come direct from their provinces and those who have passed through the Chamber of Deputies with its disturbing elections at short intervals, far from burning to check each act of the Lower House, are disposed to regard their own as a restful sanctuary which it is best not to embroil in vain strife with the more ardent branch of the legislature.

This is the impression which a sitting of the Senate gives to an onlooker. Its aspect is no longer that which it bore under the Second Empire, when on great occasions the hall of Marie de Médicis was thronged with an assembly of cardinals in scarlet robes, marshals and admirals in full array, and unofficial senators in gilded uniform. Not that the Senate under the Third Republic has an undignified appearance. Hoary age does not need a laced coat to give it dignity, and a clever artist has painted a number of these ancient men grouped in a noble gallery of the palace, with such skilful fancy that amid the Florentine architecture the dull modern costume goes unperceived, and the gray-beards might belong to the venerable heads of senators of some undefined Republic of the Renaissance.

A sitting of the Senate does not indeed present so romantic a picture. But the impression that it gives is not that of a house of legislature. The idea sometimes suggested is rather that of a retreat for elderly men of education, whose faculties are undimmed, and whose favourite pastime is to meet in a debating society to

recite to one another essays on abstract, legal, or historical questions, with an occasional reference to topics of the hour. The President takes his seat in leisurely fashion and gives a tone to the afternoon's proceedings by pronouncing in admirable language an obituary eulogy on one of their number snatched away since their last meeting, tracing his career from his birth under the First Empire, through the Restoration and the Monarchy of July up to the Second Republic — usually a glorious moment in the lives of departed senators, before Louis Napoleon stifled a genius which would have startled Europe.

If a project of Law Reform be the subject of debate, its official report will be of solid value to the student of jurisprudence or procedure. But if the serious business of the day be an interpellation involving some reference to a hundred years ago, then even the idle listeners in the uncrowded galleries will be rewarded. For these elders know their Revolution, and when the eloquence becomes impassioned as the men of '89 retort upon the men of '93, it is because they are old enough to have imbibed these far-away controversies by oral tradition. M. Jules Simon knew Robespierre's sister, and there are a dozen senators older than he who survive him. Whenever that accomplished patriarch opened his lips in the Senate, whether to illustrate a point in discussion by a personal reminiscence, or to discourse on a social subject, he charmed his hearers with the well-phrased eloquence of generations which had seen Chateaubriand and known Lamartine. The high academical standard of the debates in the Senate has been maintained by the survivors of the system of nomination,— not only old doctrinaires whose

sentiments are sympathetic to the auditory, but Reactionaries whose following grows yearly slenderer, such as M. Buffet, the venerable deputy of 1848, and M. Chesnelong, the clerical champion of lost causes. Nor are the elected senators ungifted with eloquence and style. If the debates be carefully studied, though little to enliven be manifest in them, the form of the speeches is often of surprising excellence, considering that the speakers are men unknown to fame, for the most part the country lawyers and doctors whose political careers we have been noting.

It sometimes happens that a discussion in the Upper House is wound up by a Minister who is a Deputy, a young man whom the rapid changes of governments have entrusted with a portfolio; and his jaunty volubility, suited to parry loud interruption, is after the measured arguments of the decorous homilies which he has to sum up or to refute, in contrast more striking than that between the tumult of the bustling traffic which rattles over the Pont de la Concorde past the Palais Bourbon, and the stillness of some of the old streets near the Luxembourg.

As one witnesses the scene, the position and utility of the Upper Chamber in the Third Republic may be conjectured. It has little authority in the country, either from the superiority or the popular prestige of the names on its roll. But while the unimportance of the well-conceived French Senate may be a warning to amateur constitution-menders in other lands, it serves a certain purpose in its own. The young man from the Palais Bourbon and his colleagues may one day be in a hurry, and though the Senate does not resist if the deputies

seem to be supported by the country, it gives the Lower Chamber, which is never consistent for twelve consecutive months, time for reflection. This seems to be the true utility of the Senate in the French Constitution. It does very little; it is not highly considered: but the mere existence of a Second Chamber lends a certain solidity to the Constitution, which perhaps without it would not have attained its majority, as no other constitution has in modern France.

CHAPTER II

THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

UNIVERSAL suffrage in France, like other parliamentary institutions, is not the evolution of gradual reform, as is extension of the franchise in England. Nor is it the work of the great Revolution, which in neither of its phases put it into practice.[1] Nor, again, is extended franchise the result of resistance to oppression; nor has its enjoyment any necessary connection with liberal administration or with liberty of the subject. Two generations after the summoning of the States-General, manhood suffrage was in 1848 suddenly obtained by the nation for the election of its representatives, through the fortuitous circumstance of the Revolution of February, at a moment when the people were less oppressed than at any previous period during the century; and the first tangible result of this franchise,

[1] The Constitution of 1791 adopted a system of indirect election, certain limitations being placed on the franchise of the electors both of the first and of the second degree. The Convention in 1793 established only a paper constitution, never put into practice, which laid down the principle of manhood suffrage and, following the humanitarian theories of the hour, extended it to foreigners domiciled in France under certain conditions. Before this franchise was ever exercised, the Constitution of An III. (August 22, 1795) had revived indirect suffrage, tax-paying and military service being the qualifications for electors of the first degree: and this system lasted till Bonaparte took things in hand.

which fifty years later England has not, was the popular consecration of the autocracy of the Second Empire.

When, therefore, the National Assembly in 1875 declared in the first article of its Constitutional Law that the Chamber of Deputies should be elected by universal suffrage, it was not thereby proclaiming a new era. Nor was it defining the régime under which the country was to be administered, as that democratic franchise, to which the accidental Republic of 1848 had given birth, had proved a docile instrument in the arbitrary hands of Louis Napoleon; and the Reactionary majority returned to the Assembly of 1871 was a further proof that its free exercise was not incompatible with the establishment of a monarchy.

I

The registration laws under the Third Republic are based on the organic decree promulgated by Louis Napoleon two months after the Coup d'État.[1] All Frenchmen who have attained the age of twenty-one, and who have not by judicial condemnation lost their civil and political capacity,[2] have the right to be electors without any fiscal

[1] Décret organique: 2 Février, 1852.

[2] The French law of electoral disqualification is severe; for example, a sentence of three months' imprisonment for adulteration of food or the use of false weights carries with it perpetual disqualification which can never be removed. All the condemnations which a Frenchman incurs are inscribed on his "casier judiciaire," deposited with the tribunal of his native arrondissement, and as soon as a man is arrested in any part of France, on his identity being established, a copy of his casier judiciaire is sent for, on which his new offence is inscribed. If he incur a sentence depriving him of electoral rights, it is reported to his domicile as well as to his birthplace. In large towns there are no doubt instances of disqualified electors getting on the register, but the cases are few as the penalties

or other qualification. For the enjoyment of the suffrage the only condition required of a man in full possession of his civic rights is that he shall be inscribed on the electoral lists, and the system of registration is in France so simple and so inexpensive as to compel the admiration and envy of inhabitants of the United Kingdom doomed in perpetuity by the wisdom of their reformers to cumbrous and inexpensive complexity. When, a generation ago, Mr. Disraeli, with alien perspicacity, taught the English people that wide extension of the franchise was not fraught with revolutionary peril, it might have been hoped that by the end of the century manhood suffrage would be the basis of election both of the House of Commons and of all local administrative bodies. That uniformity can never be realised owing to the granting of the vote to women in municipal and other elections, which perpetuates the possession of property as the basis for electoral suffrage, and defers the unencumbered enjoyment by all citizens of an uniform and intelligible franchise to the distant period looked forward to by politicians whose ideals need the genius of Aristophanes[1] or of Swift to do them justice.

are heavy. The most frequent are those of uncertified bankrupts (*faillis non réhabilités*) whose motive for getting on the register of a new domicile is not that of electoral fraud, but the concealment of their history, which, if known, would destroy their commercial credit.

[1] "The Franchise and Removal of Women's Disabilities Bill provides that every man and woman of full age, whether married or single, shall be qualified to vote at a parliamentary or local election, who resides in the area for which the election is held and is duly registered, unless disqualified (for a reason other than sex or marriage) by common law or Act of Parliament, and no other person shall be qualified to vote at any such election. No person shall be disqualified by sex or marriage from being elected, or being a member of either House of Parliament, or of a borough or county council, or from exercising any public functions what-

Without the invention of the feminine voter, it is to be doubted if a franchise admitting of a system of registration so simple would ever commend itself to the British Parliament, which, whatever the ulterior benefit of its legislation, rarely adds a page to the statute-book not of primary advantage to lawyers and other unproductive operatives. It has been stated without challenge in the House of Commons that the registration of votes costs our country £700,000 a year,[1] that is to say more than the Militia forces of the United Kingdom, or the Science and Art Department under the Education Office; and of this portion of the nation's wealth annually squandered, without increasing the welfare of a single human being, the public purse contributes £450,000, a larger sum than the expenses of our Diplomatic and Consular relations with the entire world.

As the registration of 6,000,000 electors of Great Britain and Ireland costs their fellow-countrymen at least

ever. The date on which the Act is to come into force is not specified" (*Times*, February 20, 1896).

[1] "The cost of registration to the public for the general register was £350,000 a year. Then, under the Parish Councils Act, there was an entirely distinct charge for registration created of no less than £100,000 a year; therefore, £450,000 a year was spent out of the public rate for registration. There was the expense to political parties — at least £250,000 a year; therefore £700,000 a year was now being spent in registration. Then came the proposal of the Government, which he hoped would be modified, for a double registration. He did not say it would be double the present cost, but it would cost the public nearly £300,000 more, and political parties perhaps another £200,000." (Mr. S. Storey, House of Commons, May 1, 1894. Second reading of Registration Bill.) I have not taken into consideration the last estimate of the Speaker, but only his calculation of the cost of registration at the moment of this speech. The estimates for the same year appropriated £600,000 to the Militia; £692,000 to the Science and Art Department; and £431,000 to the Diplomatic and Consular Services.

£700,000 a year, while 10,000,000 Frenchmen[1] entitled to the suffrage enter into the enjoyment of it for an imperceptible outlay, it is not without interest to observe the system practised in France, even though we can never hope to imitate it.

The registration of electors in France is conducted by the municipalities; and as the entire country is divided into communes, all similarly administered (excepting that of the capital), and as all local governing bodies — departmental, district, and municipal councils — are chosen by the same electorate, the machinery for conferring upon citizens the right to vote is extremely simple. The electoral lists are permanent, subject to an annual revision. In each commune, included entirely in one constituency, a Commission of three inhabitants is annually nominated, composed of the mayor and two delegates, one appointed by the Préfet of the Department, and the other by the municipal council. In Paris the Commission in each of the thirty-seven electoral districts is composed of the mayor of the arrondissement, of a municipal councillor of the quarter, and of an elector named by the Préfet of the Seine. A similar plan is pursued at Lyons, but, as no provincial town has more than one mayor, deputy-mayors are delegated for the duty. During the first ten days of each year[2] the Com-

[1] The electorate of the United Kingdom at the general election of 1895 numbered 6,415,469 voters; that of France at the general election of 1893, 10,446,178. In the United Kingdom there are at least half a million duplicate voters, while in France there are none.

[2] In the autumn a placard is posted on the walls of the towns, of which the following is an example: "Department of X: Arrondissement of Y: Town of Z. The Mayor of Z hereby gives notice that the electoral revision takes place every year before January 15, and invites all those not yet inscribed on the lists, who fulfil the conditions prescribed by the

mission proceeds with the revision of the lists. After erasing the names of persons who have died, who have departed, who have forfeited their electoral rights or who have been previously inscribed by error, the commissioners add to the list the names of those inhabitants who, at the end of March, will have become qualified by age [1] and by six months' residence. The maximum space of time during which a French elector can be voteless by reason of change of residence is seventeen months; but votes thus lost are very rare, as the law provides for the two classes in the French population most prone to move. The inhabitants of large towns, divided into a number of electoral areas, who, in quitting one quarter for another, change their constituency without going beyond the municipal boundary, have simply to certify their residence of six months within its limits in order to be put immediately on the register of the division of their new domicile, — Paris, like all other French cities, forming but one commune. Moreover, all public functionaries whose place of residence is obligatory, and who are the most numerous migratory body in France, from members of the clergy and the magistracy to elementary school-masters and postmen, have the right to be placed on the register at once.

A new resident in a commune, on his first application to be inscribed as an elector, has to produce proof that he has demanded the removal of his name from the electoral lists of his former residence; and if by error an elector's

law, to present themselves at the Mairie without delay to claim their registration, or to notify their change of residence if any have taken place."

[1] A resident who comes of age on the last day of the qualifying period has the right to be inscribed as an elector if he have lived in the commune for six months.

name be left on the list of two constituencies and he vote more than once he subjects himself to the penalty of two years' imprisonment. Except, however, in constituencies near one another, the rule of holding all the elections on the same day makes plural voting almost impossible. If a man has residences in several communes, he is free to choose the one in which he will exercise the suffrage, but the principle of "one man one vote" is so stringently carried out that he cannot be inscribed as an elector for the deputy in one place and in another for the municipal council. Hence it happens, notably in the region near Paris, that landowners and residents are sometimes municipal councillors of their rural commune without having a vote there, if they have preferred to claim it in the urban domicile.

The proceedings of the Commissions are very simple, and in no respect resemble those of an English Revision Court. The sittings are not public; neither the deputy, the future candidates, nor the political organisations are represented; but a fortnight after the opening of the revision it is announced by public notice that the revised list has been deposited at the Mairie to be inspected by all comers. No expense, however, is incurred in printing; the new list is written in duplicate, one copy being sent to the Préfet of the Department, and the other retained at the Mairie for inspection for three weeks, during which any elector of the constituency, whether resident in the commune or not, can notify omissions or undue insertions in the list; and any person whose name is thus objected to is informed by the mayor of the objection and requested to reply to it. After this the Commission of revision is increased by the addition of two delegates of

the municipal council,[1] and the five commissioners constitute a court for adjudicating on all claims and objections. The sittings again are not public, nor are the interested parties represented. They are, however, forthwith notified of the decisions of the Commission, and the proceedings are finished by the middle of February. Any elector in the constituency, whether personally affected or not by the judgment of the Commission, can appeal free of cost to the Juge-de-Paix of the canton. A decision of this magistrate can be further appealed against in the Cour de Cassation in the rare case of questions arising of misconstruction of the law by the judge, and when a decision is thus quashed the case is sent for trial before another Juge-de-Paix.

It is interesting to mention these judicial safeguards of the suffrage provided by the law, but as a matter of practice not one in twenty thousand is ever disputed of the decisions of the Commissions, composed though they be of laymen, usually of slender education, and always unaided by legal assessors.

The inexpensiveness of the revision of the electoral register is thus due in the first place to its being gratuitously performed by private citizens without the intervention of lawyers, of electioneering agents, and of other fee-seeking experts. In the second place a great economy is effected by the practice of having the list written and not printed. It is difficult for British politicians to imagine an election being fought, or an electoral organisation prepared, without the aid of "a marked register,"

[1] At Paris and Lyons the two extra members of the Commissions, instead of being nominated by the Municipal Council, are co-opted by each Commission from among the electors of the constituency.

but candidates in France do not perceive the need for that costly engine. The commune is so entirely the base of civic life, that a written list deposited in each Mairie, at the disposal of every one who wishes to peruse or to copy it, is published in a manner fully as effective as would be the exposure of printed matter at church doors, or the faculty of purchasing unwieldy catalogues of the male adult population of the region. That the lack of printed registers causes no inconvenience is shown by the facility with which the voting papers are distributed to the electorate by the candidates, who to effectually carry out that practice are compelled to know the names and addresses of all the voters. But the communal system, combined with the uniformity of franchise, so simplifies the machinery of French civic life, that the agents of the candidates in the communes have no difficulty in providing a complete list of electors.

How inexpensive the registration is may be judged from the fact that even in great cities like Lyons no outlay is set down in the municipal budget for the preparation of the lists. The cost is so infinitesimal that it is included in incidental office expenses, and although the lists are written, the entire work of their preparation is performed by the ordinary clerical staff of the municipality. In the vast majority of French communes that staff consists of one person, the secretary of the Mairie, who is the village school-master, and the drawing up of the lists is simply part of his unaided routine duty. If the registration of the voters of France were to fall into abeyance for a year or two the budgets of the communes for salaries and printing would undergo no decrease, and a saving of public money would be

effected only in the diminished quantity of paper and ink consumed in the writing of the lists.

A criticism applied to the system is that it puts uncontrolled power into the hands of the mayors and the active politicians of the municipal councils. The mayors, though no longer nominated by the central Government, are in a large majority of the communes Republican, and it frequently happens that the commissioner appointed by the Government is practically as much the nominee of the mayor[1] and of the council as is the third commissioner, who is the delegate of the municipality. Thus the first revision of the lists may be left entirely to the political group, of which the mayor is the leading spirit; and the two delegates added by the municipal council for the final revision would naturally belong to the same coterie.

The disadvantage of the system was illustrated by the Toulouse case, brought to trial in 1894. The Radical-Socialist party in the ancient capital of Languedoc desired to gain the ascendancy in the town council, for the purpose, it was alleged, of getting possession of the patronage to the municipal offices, which are numerous in a large city; and as the register is identical for the elections of councillors and of deputies, its manipulation affected the parliamentary contest. In the course of judicial proceedings it was discovered that the electoral

[1] The usual practice is for the sous-Préfet to ask the mayor (who is his representative in the commune) to name the delegate of the Government, and he generally chooses a municipal councillor. In cases where the municipal council is not in favour at the prefecture (if, for example, its majority is reactionary), then the sous-Préfet gets some functionary in the canton, such as the Juge-de-Paix or the Brigadier of the Gendarmerie, to name the commissioner.

lists, which had served for the general elections of 1893, contained 3000 names of fictitious persons. The confession of certain clerks employed at the Hôtel de Ville divulged how this falsification was effected. Wholesale additions were made to the lists, of the names of persons who were dead, were bankrupt, or who had left Toulouse, and, with the aid of chemicals, names were removed of voters opposed to the Radical-Socialists. As a duplicate register at various stages of its completion is deposited at the prefecture, it was necessary to abstract it, and complicity therefore was essential between the agents of the central authority and those of the municipality. The Government, by presidential decree,[1] removed the Préfet of the Haute Garonne to another department, thus showing that his conduct was not above suspicion, and dissolved the town council, as the frauds had been perpetrated primarily for the quadrennial municipal elections of 1892; but as the parliamentary election of 1893, which was conducted on a register still packed with fictitious names, had been validated by the Chamber there was no possibility of inquiring if the deputies owed their seats to the frauds. The method of using the falsified lists on polling day will be more conveniently noticed when we consider the general subject of Electoral Corruption, and we shall then see that this affair of the falsification of the register resembles all corrupt electoral practices in France in that it could not have been successfully performed without the complicity of functionaries.

As to the Toulouse scandals being the result of the French system, no doubt a printed register, publicly exposed, would be more difficult to mutilate than writ-

[1] September 22, 1894.

ten lists; and if the revision were conducted by paid magistrates, as has been proposed,[1] less scope would be given for the enterprise of partisan town councillors. But even if there were twenty municipalities in France as corrupt as that of Toulouse, it would not be worth while to establish a costly system of registration to check frauds, the facility of which is now chiefly due to public indifference. Half-a-dozen vigilant electors could have exposed the frauds at Toulouse before the perpetrators had time to utilise them. Moreover, if it be true, as French critics say, that the fraudulent spirit exists in other districts, it would be difficult in all but a few populous places for the most audacious political band to attempt to falsify the lists, as the sparseness of the population of the area for registration would render detection inevitable. Toulouse, though its population is barely 150,000, is the sixth city of France, and in the entire country there are only about fifty communes with a population of over 30,000; while of all the 36,000 communes, 28,000 have a population of less than 1000, and the detection of either fraud or error in the lists of electors is thus within the competence of any inhabitant who is disposed to give ten minutes to the task.

II

The political indifference of the French electorate is such that it is marvellous that scandals like that of

[1] *E.g.* the bill introduced in 1895 by M. Louis Passy, deputy of the Eure, after the scandals of Toulouse, which provided that the final commission of revision should be cantonal instead of communal (the canton being the administrative area intermediate to the commune and the arrondissement), and should consist of the Juge-de-Paix and two persons nominated by the Civil Tribunal of the arrondissement.

Toulouse are not more frequent. Even there, in spite of the addition to the lists of 3000 non-electors, who doubtless all went to the poll, nearly a third of the persons on the register refrained from voting. It is a significant fact that in the regions where the elections cause the greatest excitement, giving the impression that the entire population is interested in them, the abstentions are most numerous. The most turbulent election of 1893 was that of the Var, when M. Clemenceau lost his seat at Draguignan; but though, to assure his defeat, the forces of the boulevards were transported to Provence, the department, which for a week was the talk of Europe, entered so tepidly into the fray, that only one-half of its voters went to the poll; and in the next division, at Toulon, the deputy elected received only a fifth of the votes on the register. The neighbouring Bouches-du-Rhône is politically the most conspicuous of provincial electorates, yet the attraction of 74 candidates for eight seats brought to the urns little more than half of its electors; and at Marseilles, whose boast it is that on its Cannebière take birth the revolutions which convulse France, barely a quarter of the voters in certain divisions took the trouble to attest their progressive faith.[1]

Bordeaux is a city of less exuberant manners, but it has continued its political prominence, which was its tradition

[1] Marseilles maintains its tradition of procuring its prominence by the voices of but a small proportion of its citizens. M. Taine, in showing how the devolution of political power to the people in 1789–90 in reality meant the surrender of the government to the violent minority, says that the election of the Mayor of Marseilles in 1790, when the city was already in insurrection, was accomplished by the votes of one-eighth of the citizens authorised to vote under the new law (*Révolution*, liv. iii. c. 1).

even before the days of the Girondins. It was the last stronghold of Boulangism, and the final stand of that party made the general election of 1893 of rare interest; yet in the three urban divisions Republicans and Monarchists, Socialists and Boulangists, could not bring to the polls 55 per cent of the electors. This occurred again in 1896, when the moderate Republicans, who boasted that they were forming a new national party of order, sent to Bordeaux a retired ambassador to contest a seat. The prosperous and the industrious classes so little heeded the proffered honour that they let a Socialist win by the votes of little more than a quarter of the electors on a register of twenty thousand. The Bordelais, who in all classes unite to their commercial genius a fine taste for the amenities of life, hold that six laborious days, spent in increasing the national prosperity and their own, call for a Sabbath of unalloyed recreation; so, after saying their prayers, on a summer's morning before the sun is high they are already speeding to the valleys of the Dordogne, or sailing down the Garonne towards the ocean, past the vineyards of the Médoc which give them wealth. In deference to this popular practice the authorities at Bordeaux sometimes open the poll at 6 o'clock,[1] but without conspicuous result.

The hard-working classes, both here and elsewhere, have often for politics a disregard akin to contempt. Why should they risk the missing of a boat or a train, and sacrifice the holiday joy of a whole family, for the

[1] The usual polling hours are from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M., but the Préfet, on the representation of a mayor, can order the opening of the poll in any commune at any hour after 5 A.M. The hour of closing cannot be modified.

sake of sending to divert himself in Paris an Opportunist, or a Socialist, or a Reactionary politician? The persistent refusal of a large proportion of the citizens to use their electoral privilege saddens the souls of legislators, who like to be thought the chosen of the manhood of the nation. So they have discerned that it is the month of August which is fatal to electoral zeal. The gastralgic are at the waters; the well-to-do are at the sea; the autumn manœuvres, the children's vacations, the ending harvest and the coming vintage all combine to distract the voter from his civic duties; so a less supine season has been decreed for future general elections while the Republic lasts.[1] More vigorous methods are also proposed for replenishing the neglected urns. One project laid before Parliament for making the vote compulsory provided that the bad citizen who failed to poll should have his name placarded in the constituency; and if this infamy did not bring repentance he should be fined; and if he still remained obstinate, the Bastille being demolished and transportation to Cayenne expensive, he should be condemned eternally never to vote again as the extreme penalty for never having voted hitherto.[2]

Montesquieu, whose acquaintance with democratic gov-

[1] Loi du 20 Juillet, 1893.

[2] Proposition Letellier: June, 1893. M. Bardoux had previously, in 1880, drafted a similar project of law, which the chamber never took into consideration. In 1881 there was the case of an entire commune, containing 103 electors, abstaining from the vote, and an attempt was made consequently to annul the election, but the bureau of the Chamber held that if this were done it might suggest an easy method of making void elections. M. Viette, the Minister of Public Works, in August, 1893, in order to remove temptation from lukewarm politicians, who preferred a holiday to the performance of their civic duties, suppressed the Sunday excursion trains on the polling day.

ernment was theoretical, said that the tyranny of a prince is not more ruinous for a state than public indifference to the common weal in a republic; but my personal impression is that the political indifference of the French electors, as displayed in their abstention from the vote, is of salutary effect in France. It would be too much to say that the three millions of electors on the register who fail to record their votes at the elections include all that is best and worthiest in the nation, but the proposition would not be extravagant. Those who abstain are not only men eminent in letters and art, of ill example perhaps in their disdain for politics; not rare philosophers like M. Taine, who, attaining manhood at the epoch when universal suffrage was granted and uncertain how to bestow his vote, spent the rest of his life without reaching a definite conclusion.[1] In a democracy such fastidious units, however eminent, count for little. Their abstention becomes important when it is joined to that of humbler workers in every sphere of life, in every region of the land. Explore the French departments; live among the people and observe the most industrious villager or the most cultivated tradesman in the country town; question him about the local deputy or the elections, and his reply will be, "Je ne m'occupe pas de politique"—a peasant may use a more vigorous verb. It might be thought that the wholesale abstention from the polls of hard-working, self-denying, and often highly civilised members of a society whose political representation sorely needs sanitation is an evident evil. It would be so in a community which had adopted with the parliamentary system its necessary corollary, the party system; but as

[1] *L'Ancien Régime*, Préface.

things are in France it is perhaps for the public good that so large a proportion of the population voluntarily refrains from politics. Doubtless if the three million abstainers[1] were organised into one party they could control the Chamber, but the only result of driving them to the poll would be to scatter their votes among the candidates representing existing groups.

It is not as though French parliamentary elections turned on great questions interesting every citizen of intelligence. As a rule, they present no question whatever to the electorate. The only real exception to that rule was in 1877, when the country had practically to decide for or against the Republican form of government. But even then when the proportion of voters reached its maximum under the Republic, the poll fell short of the plebiscite of 1851, which consecrated the Coup d'État, though the registered voters were more numerous, and it only approached it because of the quasi-plebiscitary character of the elections of 1877, which were worked by a power absolutely necessary to move the French people, — the name of a man, — for the verdict of the nation after the Seize Mai was to some extent the personal triumph of Gambetta. In 1885 the unpopularity of M. Jules Ferry stimulated the Reactionaries, and in 1889 the cult for General Boulanger, though waning, was not quite spent; so in those two years the abstentions were fewer than in

[1] It is futile to attempt to institute a comparison between the proportion of abstentions in France and in the United Kingdom, as not only does the suffrage differ in the two countries, but in the United Kingdom no poll is held for uncontested elections. The recruits doing their military service account for a certain number of abstentions; but as the army of France is one of its most admirable institutions, this fact adds to the truth of the observation that the abstentions include the best elements in the nation.

1881, when Gambetta had become the object of Republican jealousies, and in 1893, when there was not even the shadow of a name for the populace to follow, and for that matter neither policy nor party to rally them. As in France the standard of political morality is immeasurably lower than that observed in other matters by the vast majority of the nation, which is orderly, self-denying, honest, and frugal, it is clear that industrious fathers of families, who take to exercising the franchise under these conditions, run the risk of sacrificing to no purpose some of their virtues, of which the practice is the truest patriotism, and the wide-spread existence the secret of the stability of France. To devote an hour of a Sunday once in four years to depositing a ballot paper at the Mairie could not in itself demoralise a sober-minded citizen; but if by its omission he avoids the danger of becoming a politician, of reading violent political journals, of neglecting his shop or his fields for the facund joys of the café, his abstention is a contribution to the resources of France and to that reserve of good sense and diligence which alone has prevented the follies of its rulers from down-hauling it from the topmost rank of nations.

The first time that the truth of this was impressed upon me was some years ago in a southern town, where, to the café on the glaring Place de la République, the doctor and other notables of the municipal council had come to refresh themselves over the Parisian papers distributed that morning. The Boulangist epoch was not ended, and the *Intransigeant*, the *Autorité*, the *Bataille*, and the *Cocarde* were then the most potent organs to instil the gospel of the boulevards into provincial understandings. The claims of two candidates for a possible parlia-

mentary vacancy were being submitted to a traveller in the produce of Rouen, affably judicial as befitted one for whom neither capital nor provinces had secrets. The case was delicate; both rivals were free-thinkers of eminence and members of the same Masonic Lodge; the one a veterinary surgeon, being a man of science, was a disciple of Paul Bert and shared the Opportunist hostility for the plebiscitary General; the other, hitherto a Radical, having been for ten days a sous-Préfet under the Commune in 1871, had accepted the later Boulangist doctrine even to soliciting the aid of the clericals.[1] Loud roared those sons of the South as each quoted from his favourite journal epithets unknown to the French Academy reflecting on the morals of M. Constans and other statesmen, and moist grew the brow of the Parisian from Normandy as he aided the local patriots to settle the destinies of France.

The heat of the debate was rivalled outside by the torrid noonday sun blazing on the white houses of the Avenue Gambetta, deserted at this hour, whither my way took me to a modest habitation. There, in a cool apartment into which softened rays of light filtered through the shutters, the atmospheric change from the burning street without was as striking as the moral contrast of the calm of the people sitting there with the fiery uproar of the gesticulating politicians. It was the home and workshop of a wood-carver, whose skill, famed through the region, had long ago dispensed him of the need for man-

[1] M. Delahaye, a clerical ex-deputy of the Boulangist party, years later (April 2, 1896) recorded in the *Libre Parole* how for two years M. Rochefort refrained from printing in the *Intransigeant* "histoires de curé" in honour of the alliance between the Church and Boulangism. The *Libre Parole* did not come into existence till after the death of General Boulanger.

ual toil which he loved with the zeal of a craftsman of old. This simple provincial family composed a characteristic French group, the head of it grown gray in intelligent labour; his wife vigorous and orderly, keeping his books as well as the house; his daughter, as comely as was her mother before the War, lately married to a young cultivator of the neighbourhood, also present, who had completed his military service. This room full of contented people contained the materials that promote the prosperity and real glory of France — industry, thrift, family sentiment, artistic instinct, cultivation of the soil, cheerful performance of patriotic duty, and collaboration of woman in the plan of life — all impregnated with an air of the old Latin civilisation, oftener manifest in humble spheres than in the class which ought longest to have preserved it. Wishing to learn something of the political tendencies of the district, I asked about the rumoured retirement of the deputy; but my inquiry only elicited the phrase often and often repeated to me since then, "Je ne m'occupe pas de politique, Monsieur." When the old man said this there was no anger nor scorn in his tone, such as a reference to the Government of France called forth from the occupants of the neighbouring château which I had left that morning. The members of this worthy family had no ill-will for the Republic, nor indeed for any régime which allowed them to pursue their callings tranquilly; but politics were not to them an occupation for steady and industrious people.

III

In spite of the indifference of the electorate there is a disposition to equalise the value of the vote as though it

were a prized privilege. "One vote one value" is in our country sometimes declared to be the corollary of "one man one vote"; but the working of the French system shows that the latter is easier to insure than the former. The electoral area in France is the arrondissement, or administrative subdivision of the department, each returning one deputy, excepting those of a population exceeding 100,000, which are divided into two single-member constituencies, or into three if the population exceed 200,000, and so on. After each quinquennial census, if an arrondissement returning one member be found to contain over 100,000 inhabitants, it is divided into two constituencies; or if an arrondissement, hitherto divided into two, has no longer that population, one of its members is taken away. Thus the arrondissement of Carcassonne at the election of 1889 had a population just exceeding 100,000, and was divided into two constituencies, each returning a deputy. But at the census of 1891 the population had dropped to 99,418, so the entire arrondissement became one constituency returning one member. This is a good example of the difficulty of devising a scheme for equalising the value of votes, as it is clear that at the elections of 1893 each vote in this division of the Aude had but one-half the value attached to it in 1889, the reduction of the population being so slight. Moreover, as the readjustment of electoral areas is made on the basis of population, the case might occur of the population falling below the 100,000 limit, and thus reducing the representation of the arrondissement, while the electorate actually increased; the removal of an industry employing several hundred women, children, or foreigners might have such a result. Again, the pro-

portion of electors to the population differs extraordinarily in different regions in France, ranging from thirty-four for every hundred inhabitants in the Gers and in Tarn-et-Garonne, to twenty-two and twenty in the Rhône and in the Seine.[1] Also it must be borne in mind that the readjustment only takes place within the limits of an arrondissement, each one, however small, having its separate representation. Thus the Basses Alpes, with 124,000 inhabitants, has five deputies, while the Haute-Marne, with 243,000, or nearly double that population, has only three, simply because the former of these departments is divided for administrative purposes into five arrondissements and the latter into three. Even within departments the disproportion is very great. In the Basses Alpes the arrondissement of Digne has a population of 43,000, so there a vote has not a third of the value of a vote in the adjacent arrondissement of Barcelonnette, where there are but 14,000 inhabitants, and where each suffrage has seven times the value of one recorded at Carcassonne. In Tarn-et-Garonne, at Montauban, a defeated candidate in 1893 received 11,600 votes, while in the Hautes Alpes, M. Flourens, a former Foreign Minister, was returned with 2900 votes, that being an absolute majority of the entire electorate of Embrun.

[1] It is interesting to notice that after the lapse of thirty years the various departments retain almost the identical relative proportions of electorate to population, in 1863, under the Empire, Tarn-et-Garonne heading the list, and the Seine coming last as in 1893. The chief factor to make the proportion small is the presence of large numbers of foreigners in a department; after that comes the fecundity of the inhabitants of a region, as children are non-electors. Thus the departments of Brittany, which are prolific, owing to the influence of the Church, have always had a relatively small proportion. The alarming decrease in the number of births in France has increased the total proportion of electors to population, until it is now about twenty-seven per hundred.

This shows how chimerical is the idea of procuring the same value for each vote in parliamentary elections. In France, where there is every disposition to equalise it, under scrutin-d'arrondissement it could only be effected by a complete reconstruction of the administrative divisions of the country, as the confusion of areas which we English delight in could never be grafted on the symmetrical French system. In the British Islands, no doubt, the existing chaos would not be made much worse if the whole kingdom were mapped out into electoral districts of equal population; but as the population, unlike that of France, increases rapidly in many regions, the expense of perpetual boundary commissions might stay the zeal of reformers.

In France, the only method possible under the system of single-member constituencies for making the value of votes approximately equal would be to divide the departments into areas containing about 14,000 inhabitants, the population of the smallest arrondissements, but that would involve a Chamber of at least 2500 deputies, or more than double the number of the members of the States-General in 1789. It may here be mentioned that since Louis XVI. summoned the Estates of the Realm the number of members of the legislature has not regularly followed either the population or the electorate of the country. The Chamber of Deputies, under the restricted franchise of the Monarchy of July, had nearly 200 more members than the Corps Législatif of the Second Empire under universal suffrage: the National Assembly of 1871 was less numerous than the Convention of 1792, and much less numerous than the Constituent Assembly of 1848, which had more members

than the combined Senate and Chamber of the Third Republic.[1]

IV

No nomination, or similar formality, is needed as preliminary to a parliamentary candidature. All that the law requires of a candidate is that five days before the election he shall lodge at the prefecture of the department in which it is to take place a declaration, witnessed by a mayor, of the name of the constituency for which he intends to stand. Even this slight formality was only established in 1889 by the law prohibiting multiple candidatures, passed to prevent General Boulanger being returned by constituencies all over France. Old doctrinaire Radicals, enemies though they be of plebiscitary manifestations, consider the remedy worse than the evil it was aimed against. The mere recognition of candidates for Parliament is, they argue, the negation of the sovereignty of the people, as the law should have cognisance of no class other than electors and elected; it being a mark of such sovereignty that the people should choose for representatives whom it pleases, whether candidates or not.[2] If this theory be sound, numbers of ardent Republicans are in heresy to

[1] The numbers of the Chamber under the Republic have increased with the population from 533 in 1877 to 581 in 1893. At the end of the Second Empire there were 290 deputies, and under the Monarchy of July 460. There were 1145 members of the States-General, 778 of the Convention of 1792, and 900 of the Constituent Assembly of 1848.

[2] "Cincinnatus is at his plough and I am not allowed to approach him; his candidature not having been registered here, or being registered in some other place where he will not be elected, I must resign myself to doing without Cincinnatus." This was the lament of M. Henri Maret, but it may be doubted if a veteran enemy of dictatorship was happy in thus evoking the memory of a Roman dictator.

the doctrine of the Revolution, as the occupation of candidate is a favourite profession of multitudes of citizens.[1] In 1893 in the Seine for 45 seats there were 333 candidates nearly all Republicans, and there were provincial departments where the proportion was greater.

If the multiple candidatures of Gambetta had been prohibited by the law in the early days of the Republic, its existence might have been terminated, it having been strengthened at a critical moment by his election in 1876 by four great cities. It is, however, quite possible that had Gambetta lived the law might have been passed for his intention long before the rising of the more meteoric star of Boulanger; so jealous is the fear of politicians of the ever ready impulse of the French population to acclaim a master who would put them down from their seats.

It was likewise the fear of General Boulanger which caused scrutin-d'arrondissement to be revived in 1889 and scrutin-de-liste to be discarded after a short trial. We have seen that the former is merely election by single-member constituencies, each administrative arrondissement in the departments and each municipal arrondissement in Paris choosing one deputy, additional representation being bestowed, in the manner described, in the case of arrondissements of over 100,000 inhabitants. Under scrutin-de-liste the department is the electoral

[1] M. Jules Claretie, the Academician, relates that one of this class said to him, "Oui, je suis de nouveau candidat: c'est un métier comme un autre; mais il y a trop de morte saison," elections in France being quadrennial, and a perpetual candidate both for the legislature and for the local governing bodies not having the opportunity to stand more than three times in four years.

unit, each having its complement of deputies allotted to it in proportion to its population, and each elector having as many votes as there are seats ascribed to his department, without, however, the power to cumulate. A familiar example of scrutin-de-liste in our country was that of the election of the four members of the City of London up to 1867.

It is useless to examine the theoretical arguments adduced in favour of each of the two systems, as the history of the Third Republic shows that each has been taken up and discarded for reasons of expediency rather than of doctrine. Gambetta clamoured in vain for scrutin-de-liste; but the Republicans, whose jealousy foresaw it hailing him a dictator, refused to try it till he was dead, and the men who made it law in 1885 were among the keenest to abrogate it in 1889. Gambetta and his followers predicted that it would produce a race of legislators apt to treat great questions with statesmanlike grasp, unlike the delegates of the single-member divisions fit only to protect local interests, and imbued with the "esprit de clocher." Whether the spirit which hovers around village steeples is less desirable than that which is generated in the Palais Bourbon need not be discussed, though it was not observed that the Chamber elected by scrutin-de-liste in 1885 manifested breadth of view or other virtues wanting in assemblies chosen under the rival system. Indeed the most conspicuous achievement of the elect of scrutin-de-liste was to restore in a moment of panic scrutin-d'arrondissement. Whatever the theoretical beauties of the former, there is no doubt that under parliamentary government, when the plebiscitary spirit is abroad, it is

a more formidable instrument in the hands of a would-be dictator than the system of single-member divisions. Under the latter, even if multiple candidatures be permitted, the return of a popular hero by electorates in every region of the land is only a manifestation which, without revolution, can have no immediate consequence. The idol thus acclaimed can sit for but one constituency, and the others have to make a second choice among his minor adherents; whereas under scrutin-de-liste the result is more striking and of immediate constitutional effect.

This was clearly seen in the apprehensions of M. Floquet's Ministry when it restored scrutin-d'arrondissement in February, 1889. The success of General Boulanger at a series of bye-elections in departments, industrial and rural, had been followed by his return for Paris, when he polled nearly a quarter of a million votes, and 80,000 more than his opponent, the nominee of all the Republican groups. This portended that at the general elections the Boulangists would sweep entire regions. It would not have been merely the election of the General in a quarter of Paris, at Lille, at La Rochelle, and at Amiens; it would have been the return of the Boulangist list of 42 deputies for the Seine, of 21 for the Nord, and so on, in whatever departments his name was acclaimed, to fill the Chamber with a vast majority at a dictator's orders. Hence it was that, M. Constans having succeeded M. Floquet at the Ministry of the Interior, the elections of 1889 were skilfully conducted in the autumn under scrutin-d'arrondissement by the very politician who, five years before, had persuaded the Chamber that "scrutin-de-liste is not only the logical organ of the

sovereignty of the nation, but also the essential condition of government in a Parliamentary Republic."[1]

If the principle of "one vote one value" be sound, scrutin-de-liste is advantageous in that it lessens the disproportion inherent in the other system. By the law of 1885, the number of deputies allotted to each department was in the proportion of one to every 70,000 or fraction of 70,000 inhabitants. But while inequalities were thus removed, the utter indifference of the electorate on the question was shown by the lack of emotion displayed when they were restored. We have seen how, under scrutin-d'arrondissement, the department of the Basses Alpes returns five deputies, while the Haute-Marne, with double its population, returns only three. Under scrutin-de-liste, the representation of the Basses Alpes was reduced to two, and that of the Haute-Marne increased to four, a redistribution on a principle easy to understand. But when Boulangism scared back the Chamber into the single-member system, the old inequalities were revived without perceptible protest from the departments bereft of representation — a third of the whole number scattered all over the land. The fact displays the peculiar appreciation which the French have of representative government; for it is easy to conceive the uproar which would be roused in a country where parliamentarism is a tradition, were such a measure of retrograde redistribu-

[1] "Rapport fait au nom de la commission chargée d'examiner la proposition de loi de M. Constans, ayant pour objet de modifier la loi électorale; par M. Constans, député, 29 Décembre, 1884." Since the Revolution scrutin-d'arrondissement has been enacted by the law in 1792, 1820, 1831, 1852, 1875, and 1889; scrutin-de-liste in 1795, 1799, 1801, 1817, 1848, 1871, and 1885. Scrutin-de-liste is still in use for municipal elections in communes which are not large enough to be divided into wards.

tion passed even in tranquil times; yet it was accepted with quiet indifference in France on the seeming brink of revolution.[1]

V

The operation of the ballot in France is as simple and inexpensive as is that of registration. The French are wont to praise the practical spirit of the English, lamenting that they are the slaves of routine and of formula. In the preliminaries and conduct of elections for the Chamber or for local governing bodies, they have no need to deplore British superiority. No doubt the French administrative machine provides a ready-made and symmetrical framework for electoral proceedings; but if, as in our country, the idea prevailed that the exercise of the suffrage was, in its essence, a complicated action not to be consummated without costly and useless accessories, it would not be difficult to add them.

The issue to the voters of "cartes électorales," which is not required by the law, is an example of a practice adopted for its utility while of little cost. Before each election — legislative, departmental, or municipal — in each commune (or electoral division of Paris and the great towns) a paper or card is prepared for every elector in the area. The name of the department, the nature of the election, its date, and the hours of polling are

[1] Apart from the indifference of the majority of the population regarding parliamentary representation, active local politicians prefer to have a single member returned by their own district, and so more accessible to solicitation, to being merged in the department, even though the total departmental representation be reduced under the former system: for, as we shall presently see, the chief function of a deputy in his constituency is that of a dispenser of patronage.

printed, and in writing are added the name of the commune or electoral division, the elector's name, his number on the register, and the designation of the polling-place, together with the seal and signature of the Mayor. In Paris and other cities, somewhat fuller details are added for the purpose of identifying the elector, who has to sign his card when he goes to his Mairie to get it; as in populous places he is required at the moment of voting to inscribe his signature on the register to be compared with that on the card. Five-sixths of the communes of France are so small that all the inhabitants are known to one another. In them, therefore, precautions for identification are not necessary, and the cards are usually delivered at the houses of the voters by the Garde Champêtre or other agent of the municipal council. The entire cost is so trifling, including distribution, filling up by the municipal secretary, and printing, which is done wholesale at the chief town of the department, that in the budget of the humblest commune it is entered under miscellaneous expenditure.

The polling, as a rule, takes place in the Mairie. When there is more than one electoral division in a commune, elementary schools are also used; but the great bulk of the electorate of France records its vote in the 36,000 mairies, rural and urban. There is no more preparation made for the taking of the poll than there is for any ordinary municipal function within those walls, from a meeting of the Council to a marriage. There is no erection of carpentry to screen the manipulation of the ballot paper; no array of paid clerks to receive it; the accessories paid for in our country under the heading of returning-officer's expenses are entirely wanting.

The provincial council-chamber retains its every-day appearance, except that on the table is a rude and spacious wooden box, its lid pierced with a slit, manifestly of indigenous make. At the close of the election money will not be extorted from the candidates for the hire of this homely utensil. It is an article of municipal furniture, like the bust of the Republic on the mantelpiece, and the bookcase opposite containing the bound statutes, without which no Mairie is complete.[1]

Law and custom prescribe that when two or three Frenchmen are gathered together for a public purpose they shall form a "bureau" before proceeding to business. This formality sometimes causes a little delay in the opening of the poll. The bureau of an electoral college consists of a president, four assessors, and a secretary. The president is usually the Mayor, and the law directs that the assessors shall be members of the municipal council, or in their default the two oldest and the two youngest electors present. Where party spirit is high there is keen competition to serve on the bureau; but quite as often it is difficult to capture the quartette of electors to take the first turn, for on a fine Sunday it is not always easy to assure relays of devoted citizens for the duty. The assessors make no declaration, but take their seats without ceremony, as, by the time they are ready, the room is filling with the earliest voters — the Curé, who has run in between his

[1] In Paris and the suburbs, where special accommodation has to be prepared for taking the vote, some of the polling-places have to be fitted with temporary furniture, but this is effected at very little cost, as the prefecture of the Seine, which pays the bill, invites tenders for providing it. In Paris the machinery of elections, like every other commodity, is more expensive than in the provinces, urban or rural.

two masses, the postman who happens to be delivering a letter at the Mairie, or a group of peasant-farmers in clean blouses, anxious to catch a train, who firmly decline to come back in time to take a turn at the bureau.

Before the first vote is recorded the Mayor opens the ballot-box and invites all present to examine it, to see that it is empty and is not constructed with a false bottom. It is then locked with two locks, each requiring a different key, one of which the Mayor retains, the other being handed to an assessor. If the latter during the day should repair to the chase or otherwise absent himself without recollecting to hand the key to a colleague who remains on the spot, delay may be caused in the counting of the votes; for the most ardent of local patriots rarely consent to give the entire day to the service of the State, and the Mayor himself resigns his chair to a substitute for a prolonged interval when the hour of the noonday meal approaches. In communes where the number of electors is small, and there are nearly ten thousand which have an electorate of less than eighty, if the bureau come to the conclusion that every man available is polled it puts an end to the proceedings after a brief session.

The electors have to bring their own ballot papers. They are usually supplied by the candidates, but the law knows nothing of their origin. It is the practice to distribute them at the houses of electors in the form of leaflets on which is printed the candidate's name, and at the entrance to the polling-places a further distribution of them is made for the benefit of voters who have forgotten them. But there is nothing to prevent an elector from taking one from an agent of a candidate

and using it to vote for a rival by crossing out the printed name and substituting another in writing, as the name of the candidate voted for may be printed, or written in ink or in pencil, of any colour, provided the writing be legible.[1] If a voter sign his paper, the vote is lost to the candidate named on it, but it is counted in the total of votes recorded for the purpose of calculating the absolute majority. There is no legal restriction as to the size or shape of the ballot papers, but they must be of plain white paper, so that when folded up they are all of identical appearance, and even the striped letter paper in common usage in France is not accepted.

From this it will be gathered that while the law protects the elector who wishes to guard the secret of his vote, it is quite competent for him openly to display it to every one, excepting to the president of the bureau, to whom he must present it, to be deposited in the box, folded in such a way as to conceal the name written or printed on it. The elector is forbidden to write on his ballot paper within the polling-room, so his vote cannot

[1] In scrutin-de-liste, which is in use for municipal elections, it is very rare for an elector to write out a list of his own on a blank sheet. If the composition of none of the printed lists supplied satisfy him, he takes one of them and crosses out the names he objects to, and adds others of those whom he wishes to vote for, taking care that there shall not be more names on his list than there are candidates to be elected. If the names on a voting paper be too many, those nearest the bottom of the paper, whether written or printed, are not counted. As a matter of practice in scrutin-de-liste the majority of voters hand in printed lists without making any alteration, which accounts for entire party lists being carried, both in municipal elections now and in legislative elections in 1885; for to fold up a paper without making any change in it is the easiest course. If the system were followed of affixing crosses to names printed on ballot papers, it is obvious that the results would be less uniform.

be supervised up to the moment of its being given; but an illiterate voter, as indeed any other, can have his paper filled up by another person, provided it be done outside the ballot-chamber, which faculty is implied by the use of printed voting papers. The rigour of the precautions prescribed in our country to insure the secrecy of the ballot suggests the zeal which characterises tardy conversions. Secret voting is coeval in France with the suffrage, so that when the ballot-box was imported to England three generations had used it in France; but in England the franchise was the growth of centuries, and in its exercise was attended with malpractices increased by its extension and encouraged by the open system of voting. French society since the Revolution has been so dissimilarly constituted to English, that possibly the particular forms of electoral corruption, to oppose which our legislators established the ballot, would never have flourished in France even with open voting. No doubt corrupt practices had become so flagrant in the United Kingdom as to justify a rigorous Ballot Act; but our precautions, which seem excessive when compared with French practice, must in some measure be ascribed to the conviction held by English law-makers of all parties that the exercise of the franchise ought to be an intricate proceeding.

As each elector comes up to the ballot-box, before presenting his voting paper to the president, he hands his *carte électorale* to one of the assessors, who reads out the name inscribed on it for the municipal secretary to check on the list of electors before him. The president then puts the paper in the urn, and the assessor cuts off a corner of the card, for a double purpose: — to

prevent its being used again (as it has to be given back to the elector in case of a second ballot being necessary), and to check the number of voting papers when they are counted — the cut-off corners of the cards being pierced and carefully strung together on thread.

The counting of the votes is public. The "bureau" first counts the papers to see if the numbers agree with those of the names marked off on the electoral list, and of the fragments of card; it then chooses additional scrutineers from among the electors present, who seat themselves in companies of four at several tables, which have to be so placed that the electors can walk round them and survey the process of counting. The president distributes the papers among the various tables, and the scrutineers proceed with the enumeration. When this is finished and verified, the president declares the result of the voting, which has immediately to be transmitted to the chief polling-place, so it is signed by him and forthwith despatched. In large cities the results from the different polling-stations in a constituency are speedily gathered in; but as the vast majority of polling-places in France are rural and isolated communes, a special machinery has to be organised for the purpose. To each village Mairie where the voting has taken place comes a mounted gendarme, who gallops with the results of the poll to the chef-lieu of the canton, whence they are taken to the chef-lieu of the arrondissement, where the totals are added and the poll is declared. Meanwhile, at the different polling-places the ballot papers are publicly burned, excepting those which, for various reasons, the "bureau" regards as doubtful, and these are preserved in case they be required for an investigation into the election.

If no candidate have polled an absolute majority of all the votes recorded, and at the same time a quarter of all the votes on the register, a second ballot is ordered to take place on the ensuing Sunday week. At this second ballot a mere majority only is required, and the candidate who heads the poll is declared elected, however small a proportion he has secured of the votes recorded or of the votes on the register. Thus the principle of the second ballot as applied in these elections is not satisfactory or intelligible. It does not confine the second contest to the two candidates who head the poll on the first ballot according to a system practised in Germany; nor does it even eliminate from the field those candidates who have too few supporters ever to carry them, while they continue to dissipate the voting power of the party which has a majority in the constituency. The *ballotage* in France is simply the contest fought anew with all restrictions removed as to the nature of the majority. The authorities practically say to the electorates which have failed to give an absolute majority at the first competition, "You see by the first ballot the relative strength of parties and of candidates in your constituency; it is for you now to settle your representation by the rough method of mere majority." So little reference has the second ballot to the first, that it sometimes happens that a candidate who has taken the third place at the original poll is elected deputy a fortnight later; or sometimes even a new postulant for the seat, who did not stand at the first election comes forward at the *ballotage* and carries it off from the old candidates, as happened at the elections of 1893 at Orange, the Roman city in Vaucluse. Examples abound of the unsatisfactory working of the

second ballot. At Lyons a deputy was returned having received only one-seventh of the votes on the register. At Toulon, at the second ballot, the successful candidate polled only a third of the votes recorded, beating the second on the poll by twenty votes, a third candidate coming close behind, and the three together polling barely half of the votes on the register. In another division of the same department M. Clemenceau headed the poll by nearly 2000 votes at the first ballot, yet at the second he was beaten by the abnormal exertions of his Parisian enemies, who invaded the region and organised his defeat. The most conspicuous of the Imperialists, M. Paul de Cassagnac, met with the same fate at Mirande in the Gers. These instances show that the French in their *scrutin de ballotage* have not devised a system to commend itself to nations which have not yet adopted the principle of a second ballot.

In French elections the adding up of the totals of the votes counted in each electoral section, the declaration of the result of the poll, and its transmission by the Préfet of the Department to the Minister of the Interior, are successive operations, which give a candidate only the presumption that he is elected. The definite mandate of deputy has to be conferred on him by an authority apt to decide if the conscience of the voters and the provisions of the law have been respected. That supreme authority is the Chamber of Deputies, and as every election, whether disputed or not, requires validation, the anomaly follows of a body which has no valid existence verifying its own powers before it comes into being.

VI

The newly elected deputies meet at the Palais Bourbon on an appointed day; the oldest among them takes the chair and the six youngest act temporarily as secretaries of the Chamber. A provisional President and Vice-Presidents are then chosen, the choice usually being confirmed when the Chamber is legally constituted by the validation of the powers of one-half of its full complement of members. To effect this without delay the deputies are forthwith divided by lot into eleven bureaux or committees, among which the papers relating to all the elections are distributed according to the alphabetical order of the departments, the 1st Bureau investigating the returns in those from the Ain to the Aube, and the 11th in those from Vaucluse to the Yonne, as well as in Algeria and the Colonies. The bureaux then resolve themselves by lot into sub-committees of five, which proceed to report on the elections not questioned. These are dealt with expeditiously by individual committee-men, whose reports are usually accepted by the bureau. Consequently the Chamber on the morrow of its assembling is able to validate the powers of half its members. The President calls the names of the departments in alphabetical order. The Reporters, who have their verifications ready, advance to the tribune and read a form to the effect that in the department of the Ardennes, arrondissement of Mézières, or in the department of the Aisne, arrondissement of Soissons, the elections were held, at which so many electors voted on a register of so many, with the result that M. X. was elected, beating M. le Marquis de Z. by so many votes. M. X. was declared

deputy, and as the election was conducted regularly, as no protest has been entered, and as M. X. satisfies the conditions of the law as to age and nationality the 1st Bureau recommends the validation of his election. The Chamber at once ratifies the decision of the committee, and in an afternoon's sitting several hundreds of elections are thus validated.

The validation is completed with equal celerity if the Reporter entrusted with the papers advise that the protests filed with them are frivolous, or of such a nature that if substantiated they would not change the result of the poll. It is competent for any elector to initiate an inquiry into an election. No formal petition has to be presented; no sworn information is required; — nothing but a protest addressed in writing to the "Presidency" of the Chamber, whence it is forwarded to the committee which has charge of the constituency in question. If the protests are copious, or grave in character, the consideration of the election so questioned is postponed until all the uncontested returns are dealt with. Then the member of the sub-committee who has been specially charged to look into this election makes his report, and if it coincide with the views of the majority of the entire committee he is chosen as Reporter to advocate its conclusions before the Chamber, which may reject or accept them after debate. If the committee recommend the invalidation of the election, the usual practice is for the Reporter to make a speech, supporting the decision, which is answered by the deputy whose seat is at stake. The Chamber comes to a resolution without any semblance of impartiality. If it reverse the report of a committee validating a seat, it is most often because the

hazard of the ballot has given a majority to that particular bureau antagonistic to the majority in the Chamber; for a tribunal composed of members whose chief qualification is partisan zeal cannot but be biassed in adjudicating on party questions. In the division lists the Republicans do not always appear all ranged on one side and the Reactionaries on the other. As far back as Gambetta's time, in the investigations of the elections of 1881, Radicals are sometimes found voting with Monarchists in favour of the validation of Clerical candidates, not from impartiality but from desire to annoy the Opportunists.[1] No doubt there are votes given in these divisions from pure motives of justice; but as a rule the party groups stand by their members, and a Reactionary would never vote for the invalidation of a Reactionary, nor a Socialist for that of a Socialist. One reason obviously is that deputies have neither time nor inclination to peruse or to listen to lengthy reports, so they follow their usual practice in the Chamber of voting with their political group. Sometimes a committee decides a case on its merits independently of party consideration, but if the decision be not agreeable to the majority in the Chamber, the same impartiality will not be observed there. When a committee has invalidated an election, the Chamber instead of accepting or rejecting this decision has the third alternative of ordering a local investigation to be conducted by members of the Chamber, the bureaux nominating com-

[1] The experiment made of scrutin-de-liste in 1885 afforded an opportunity of wholesale executions of deputies of the Opposition, as, though it was decided that discrimination might be made between the individual cases of members, in certain departments the elections of the entire lists were annulled.

missioners who, in turn, choose a delegation from among themselves to hold the inquiry on the spot.

This happened in 1889 after an election in the Hérault, a department as famous for its electioneering scandals as for the extent of its vineyards and the past traditions of its capital Montpellier. Among the Cevennes, remote from the fertile plains about that once frequented resort, is the arrondissement of Lodève, where M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, the distinguished economist and member of the Institute, contested the seat of the Radical-sitting member. The final official return gave M. Ménard-Dorian a majority of 17 on a poll of over 14,000, which M. Leroy-Beaulieu protested was due to the fraudulent addition of 91 rejected voting papers. This was so little disputed that on the proposal of the Reporter of the committee, a Republican, the election of M. Ménard-Dorian was invalidated. M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, whose opinions are those of the *Journal des Débats*, the organ of the Left Centre, which supported him in this affair, was in the eyes of the Republican majority a Reactionary, and therefore to be kept out of Parliament if possible. It therefore, instead of invalidating the election, voted a local inquiry, which after long delays confirmed the invalidation. This was a case where the majority made use of a parliamentary form for a purely partisan purpose. The illegality of the return was from the first undisputed; but the partisans of the unfairly elected candidate knew that if the seat were forthwith declared vacant his opponent would be returned; whereas if the vacancy were postponed till a new register came into operation that might with skill be rendered impossible. We shall return to the Lodève election, which abounded in instructive in-

cidents, as in examining French electoral proceedings it is rare to find so trustworthy a witness as M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu. The use of a parliamentary majority to keep so eminent a man out of the legislature is not an incident necessarily of Republican government. It is partly the result of the instability of régimes in France which makes the upholders of each successive one regard as lawful all expedients against its opponents, and thence by an easy transition as equally lawful to be used against the opponents of the group in power; partly the result of the inability of the French to appreciate parliamentary institutions. But even in legislatures which have moments of judicial-mindedness (as has the British House of Commons on the occasion of the re-election of the Speaker), it is improbable that a party majority would remain perpetually impartial in adjudicating on the elections of the Opposition.

With the growth of a sentiment, acknowledged in countries where it is not cultivated, that legislative elections ought to be neither corrupt nor costly, their validation has become a difficult matter. The example of England in this matter is rather a warning than a model to other nations. Our former practice of trying election petitions by a committee of the House of Commons was discarded, as it was thought that the judges would form a more impartial tribunal. But the imposition of that duty upon them, in spite of their protest,[1] has not been satisfactory; and it is possible that Parliament

[1] In Weil's *Du Jugement des Élections Contestées* is quoted a declaration of the Judges of the Court of Queen's Bench made at the instance of the Lord Chief Justice in opposition to the Bill of 1868, which protests against the investiture of the judges with this function as "calculated to degrade the character of the magistracy."

may be asked to relieve them from functions inconsistent with their office and which, by taking them from their judicial work, cause expense and inconvenience to the nation. It is, however, unlikely that a scheme will ever be devised in England for the trial of election petitions without colossal profit to our great unproductive class, the lawyers, and consequent cost to the parties; for scandalous as is the prolongation of costly proceedings in petitions before the judges, lawyers are said to have made even larger sums out of them when they were tried before committees of the House.

This is an evil which France has not to fear. The inconvenience which would arise out of the validation of elections by the judicial tribunals would be that, as the magistracy is dependent on the protection of politicians, the judges would never be credited with impartial decisions however equitably they might be given. Even if the tribunal were composed of members of the Court of Appeal of Paris, who have little to look for in the way of promotion, the idea, unhappily prevalent in France, that judges are amenable to political influences, would not be repressed. This plan has been suggested by an authority on election procedure, M. Lefèvre-Pontalis, a member of the Institute, and an admirer of the English electoral machinery. A proposition which he made, when a deputy, is open to less objection, requiring a majority of two-thirds of the Chamber to invalidate an election.[1] It does not seem likely that the legislature of the Republic will modify its rights of verification. Indeed it has laid down the principle that it is absolutely sovereign in such matters. In the Blanqui case, where a person dis-

[1] December 19, 1885.

qualified by judicial condemnation was returned, the Chamber decided to invalidate his election by solemn vote instead of accepting as his disqualification the recital of the sentences passed on him depriving him of political rights. Thus the Chamber, though it in this instance corroborated the law of the land, implied that in verifying its powers it was absolutely sovereign, competent if it chose to validate the election not only of a convict, but of a minor, a woman, or a foreigner.[1]

VII

The reports of the committees and the debates arising out of them are most valuable to students of electoral practices in France to supplement their personal observation. An Englishman is struck at once with the complete dissimilarity between the methods of conducting an election here and in his own country. What is less obvious, though more remarkable, is that *les mœurs électorales* (a useful expression difficult to translate) have been less transformed in France since the absolutism of the Empire gave way to the liberty of the Republic than in England where the Constitution and even the occupant of the throne have remained unchanged.

A generation ago M. Lefèvre-Pontalis wrote a volume[2] comparing French and English parliamentary elections, after the electoral campaign of 1863, in which the Imperial Government had used all the machinery of centrali-

[1] June 3, 1879. Pierre, *Traité de Droit Politique*, 363.

[2] *Les lois et les mœurs électorales en France et en Angleterre.* Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis, 1864. The word *mœurs* in this connection suggests electoral ethics as well as practices.

sation to combat the growing Opposition. The author, having been present in England during the elections of 1857 and 1859, made the comparison the basis of an attack on the Empire, to which with other Liberals he rallied when on its death-bed it embraced Liberalism. In one description of an English contest he relates how, "amid the pealing of the church bells, the candidate arrives followed by hundreds of his partisans on horseback. Thus the youthful Lord Althorp, who at the age of twenty-two sought the suffrages of Northamptonshire, makes his entry into the county town accompanied by a cortège recalling the days of feudalism. The scene of the nomination is not less curious. The hustings, erected in one of those meadows which are the beauty of England, are surrounded by ranks of carriages arranged in a circle, reviving the traditions of the tournaments of old. Sumptuous coaches and four, the horses decked with favours, gallop up, laden with ladies gaily attired with the colours of the rival candidates. Among the ranks of the carriages country gentlemen and farmers on horseback station themselves to listen to the speeches, and special constables in every-day dress, only distinguished by their batons, respected insignia of authority, aid the county police to keep order."

Now this is a description of English electoral customs as completely disappeared into the past as those of the days of Simon de Montfort; yet it refers to so short a time ago that the young Lord Althorp was an active Minister of the Queen in the sixth decade of her reign, and one of his former colleagues who, in the House of Commons moved the resolution defeating the Government brought into office at that election, is a member of the

third Ministry of Lord Salisbury, who was himself in Parliament years before; while the French observer is still a vigorous writer who now directs his polemics against the misdeeds of the Third Republic. His impressions were perhaps somewhat idealised, but it may be remarked in passing that the most sincere admirers English institutions have ever had were the French Liberals, the men brought up in the doctrines of 1789, who in childhood under the Monarchy of July had constantly heard from the lips of witnesses of the great Revolution sentiments, such as Madame de Staël had left as a testament, that the British Constitution was "the finest monument of justice and of moral grandeur in Europe."[1] Their admiration of England had nothing in common with the grotesque Anglomania which now pervades the least intelligent section of the Parisian population: it was a profound and philosophic sentiment. It has sometimes been suggested that the more we reform our Constitution, the greater sympathy we shall enjoy in the nation which is the offspring of the French Revolution. But this is a grave error. Gambetta, for reasons of personal friendship, had a strong liking for English Radicalism of a certain school; but he has left no successors, and the only abiding cult for England lingers among the survivors of the school of M. Léon Say, who look with dismay at changes which tend to transform the pattern of their political creed into a new-fashioned model fitted with untried machinery.

In France, for all its constitutional instability, the reason why electoral methods under the Republic bear a remarkable likeness to those of the Second Empire is not

[1] *Considérations sur les principaux événements de la Révolution Française*, Ouvrage posthume, 1818.

merely that the bulk of the electoral laws survive; it is that its fabric of centralised Government outlives revolutions and changes of régime. Constructed by Napoleon on the remains of foundations laid by the Ancient Monarchy, it is so strong that it perpetuates certain relations between the Government and the governed, which no change or revision of constitution, no reform of organic laws materially affects. To foreign eyes this is markedly conspicuous in the circumstances which attend the exercise of the franchise.

Under the Second Empire the most notable features of the elections were the official candidatures and the official pressure which favoured them. The former have practically disappeared, but the latter is inherent in the French administrative system. Under Louis Napoleon the rule was established that candidatures agreeable to the Government should be notified to the population by means of placards printed on the white paper which in France is reserved for official announcements—the famous *affiches blanches*—and candidates who used them without authority were, if elected, disqualified as having thereby attempted to deceive the electorate. Royalists and Republicans alike had so suffered under this dispensation that the National Assembly, with the Germans still at the gates of Paris, and the Commune threatening its insurrection, hastened to protest against the principle. After the Seize Mai, in which minor *coup d'état* Marshal MacMahon had the support of the Bonapartists, at the elections of 1877 the white placards reappeared here and there, but this attempt of the Reactionaries to improvise the minutely organised effects of the Second Empire was, like everything else they have essayed since the War, unsuccessful,

and the consolidation of the Republic dates from this failure. Moreover, one of the principal agencies of official candidature had already been abolished. The mayors of the villages, to the number of 33,000, hitherto nominated by the Government, were henceforth elected by the municipal councils,[1] and though four-fifths of the old mayors were left undisturbed the new derivation of their powers gave an altered character to their office. The remaining 3000 mayors of the towns and of the bigger villages[2] were still appointed by decree from among the members of the councils (though the Government used its prerogative with great moderation) till 1882, when the free choice of mayor was extended to all the municipalities[3] except to that of the capital, which has a special organisation.

We shall see to what extent the mayors are still agents of the central authority, but the change in the method of their appointment betokened a desire to modify the tradition of the Second Empire. Nevertheless, as its memory became dim, official candidature (which its subsequent modified use shows to be not repugnant to the French idea of the functions of centralised government) might later have been openly revived had the accession of President Grévy inaugurated an era of party government; that is to say, had a united Republican party been faced by a formidable Reactionary minority, and had its chief concern been the suppression of that opposition. The

[1] Loi du 12 Août, 1876.

[2] Chefs-lieux de département, d'arrondissement et de canton.

[3] Between 1876 and the passing of the law of February, 1882, the Government had practically relinquished to the municipal councils the nomination of their mayors, overruling the wishes of the majority in only about 300 communes.

average duration, however, of M. Grévy's first Cabinets was less than seven months, showing that the Third Republic was to be an era of government by group, the groups not being well defined, and each new ministry usually containing several members of the fallen Cabinet. There was no fear therefore of the revival of the official candidature as it had flourished under Louis Napoleon, methodically organised by Préfets under the public direction of the central authority; as in the frequent case of a contest between Republicans of different shades it would be awkward to favour openly the claims of a candidate whose rival might be returned and might become within the Republican ranks a formidable opponent of the Ministers who had shown him hostility. But it would be contrary to the spirit of French administration if its agents abstained from all interference in the free choice by the electorate of legislative representatives.

In a handbook of the Chamber, wherein the biographies of the deputies were revised by themselves, it is recorded that "M. Constans as Minister of the Interior presided over the elections of 1881, which were a brilliant victory for the Republican party."[1] Here without disguise a complacent Minister declares that the results at the polls of a general election were due to his being at the time Minister of the Interior, with all the wires of the French administrative machine in his hands. In 1889 M. Constans was again at the Place Beauvau, and he superintended the elections on this more critical occasion with

[1] *La chambre de* 1889, par A. Bertrand, Secrétaire-Rédacteur du Sénat. M. Constans retired to the Senate in 1889, and in the handbook of the Upper House *Nos Sénateurs*, 1894–97, it is again recounted that he "presided over the legislative elections in 1881 and 1889."

even greater success, as Boulangism, in spite of the flight of its leader, was still a force in France, and it needed a skilful wielding of the weapon of centralisation to combat the dissatisfaction with the existing régime. So great was the repute of M. Constans as the strong man for manipulating elections that in spite of virulent attacks made on his personal character and history, his return to office, to direct the elections of 1893 unfavourably to the party of disorder, was desired by many moderate politicians who did not share his political opinions. Such is the importance attributed to the occupancy of the Ministry of the Interior during the electoral period that M. Dupuy, who in 1893 held that office in conjunction with the Premiership, publicly announced that it was he and not M. Constans who was to preside over the coming elections, and on the eve of them, in accordance with a practice handed down from the Empire, he summoned to Paris the Préfets to elicit the latest information upon the state of feeling in the country and to give them their final orders.

There are few French politicians who do not regard the interference of the government in elections as legitimate, excepting unsuccessful candidates who have been victims of the system. That there is no popular sense of its impropriety is shown by the fact that ephemeral ministers do take the trouble to direct elections on the principle of *sic vos non vobis*, as it is nearly always for his successors that the Minister of the Interior works,[1] and it is impossible

[1] M. Constans, after directing the 1881 elections as Minister of the Interior in the first Ferry Cabinet, was turned out of office a month later by the advent of the Gambetta Ministry. M. Allain Targé, Minister of the Interior at the elections of 1885, remained in office ten weeks after the polls. M. Constans, after his success in 1889, did himself remain at the Place Beauvau for over two years, but the Tirard Ministry, of which he

for him to foretell which deputies will continue to support the Cabinet after the elections and which will combine with Reactionaries or Socialists to bring about its speedy downfall.

At the elections of 1893 there was an average of two Republican candidates for every seat in the provinces;[1] but among nearly 600 constituencies there were only about seventy contests confined to one avowed Reactionary and one Republican, the only class of combat wherein by tradition it were legitimate for the central Government to interfere. Hence the candidatures which have in their incidents some resemblance to those patronised by the Empire, are now seen only in those rare regions where the Reactionaries are a formidable force. In the Gers, when M. Paul de Cassagnac in 1893 lost the seat he had held for eighteen years as a Bonapartist, the Préfet on the eve of the poll issued *affiches blanches* prejudicial to his candidature, which, as a veteran Imperialist, he must have admired in principle though they contributed to his defeat. This was celebrated by the authorities quite in

was then a member, disappeared in a few months, he resuming his portfolio under M. de Freycinet; he, however, never became Prime Minister, and M. Dupuy was the first Republican Premier who was Minister of the Interior at an election. He remained in office three months after directing the elections of 1893, being dismissed a fortnight after the reassembling of Parliament.

[1] If the department of the Seine were included it would considerably raise the average, as there were over 300 candidates of various shades of Republicanism for the forty-five constituencies of Paris and its suburbs; but I have omitted the metropolis, as curiously enough the Préfet of the Seine and the agents of the central Government have at its seat no influence whatever. In the provinces, while there was an average of two Republican candidates for every seat, in many constituencies there was no contest, and in many others there were three or four Republicans opposed to one another.

the manner of the period when M. de Persigny superintended the elections, and the day after the poll the successful Republican candidate made a triumphal entry into Auch, the capital of the department, with the Préfet who escorted him round the archiepiscopal city in a carriage and four.[1] Previously, in 1888, when M. Flourens, Minister for Foreign Affairs, not hitherto in Parliament, was elected deputy in the Hautes Alpes, the Radicals declared he owed his return to an official candidature accompanied by all the coercive practices of the Second Empire; and the Chamber was so nearly convinced that this was so that it was only by a narrow majority that it rejected a proposition disqualifying Ministers from being candidates at bye-elections.[2]

The new forms of official candidature, which have grown up under the Third Republic, are more interesting to study as special products of France than easy to justify under the altered condition of things. Sometimes the Government interferes on behalf of one Republican candidate against another, without, indeed, the intervention of the Préfet, but by other methods well known under the Empire. In 1893 the contest at Sancerre in the Cher was between the sitting member, M. Maret, the well-known Radical journalist, and M. Picot, a distinguished member of the Institute. Both professed loyalty to the Republic, and if M. Picot's moderation savoured of reaction, M. Maret's independence had often allied him with the Monarchists in overturning Republican ministries. To an outsider it

[1] September 4, 1893.

[2] February 17, 1888. The Tirard Ministry escaped defeat on this motion by 238 votes against 221.

seemed that the rare instance of an electoral contest between two persons above the mediocre level of parliamentary candidates in France, would have been an occasion to allow the constituency to pronounce its opinion freely on the respective merits of two schools of Liberalism. This was not the view of the Cabinet in Paris. Desiring the return of M. Maret, the Minister of Agriculture bethought him that a Government subsidy might be acceptable to the Berrichon vine-growers, and three days before the poll[1] he indited to "Monsieur le Député" an official letter announcing the gift, and making it clear to the peasants that but for M. Maret being their member, they would have got no contribution. "I am delighted," said the Minister, in the letter published in the local journals on the eve of the poll, "to be able to bear testimony to the value I attach to your kind intervention in this matter."

It is significant to find a Republican victim of the Imperial tribunals aided in his elections under the Third Republic by the identical methods practised under the Second Empire, and denounced by his colleagues of the Opposition thirty years before. The polemical literature of that corrupt period contains many a passage which well describes France regenerate under the Republic. "The rural communes," wrote M. Jules Ferry in 1863, in a pamphlet exposing the methods of M. de Persigny, "subsist upon the alms of the Department or of the Treasury, as is too manifest, alas, at election times. The tempter has no need to dazzle their eyes with the kingdoms of the earth; the making of a road, or of a foot-bridge, satisfies the

[1] M. Viger, August 17, 1893.

dreams of these poor people."[1] M. Ferry goes on to relate how an official announcement, posted at the Mairie, notified to a struggling village that the Préfet was empowered to grant about a quarter of the sum given by the Republican Minister of Agriculture to the constituents of M. Maret, and he adds, "By a happy coincidence, the benefaction happened to be made just on the eve of the poll." So does history repeat itself; and the reason why the Republic, which M. Ferry helped to establish, reproduces the acts which he denounced as evidence of the corruption of the Empire, he indicates in the same pages, "It is not the Government that I accuse, but centralisation; not the heir, but the heritage."

If in the Berry, the Government of 1893 favoured the candidate of the Extreme Left against the moderate Republican, its agents took the opposite course in Languedoc. A Radical journal of Toulouse, to which curiously enough M. Maret was an occasional contributor, denounced in such strong terms the "scandalous pressure" exercised by the Préfet of the Aude in favour of the Moderate candidate for Carcassonne to the prejudice of his Radical opponent, that a duel took place between that functionary and the editor. In Provence, at the same elections, we find another phase of electoral influence exercised by the central authority. At Draguignan, M. Clemenceau, who headed the poll at the first vote, and was beaten on the second ballot, was said to have had the support of the Préfet of the Var, although the Government undoubtedly wished to rid the Chamber of the redoubtable destroyer of ministries. The speedy

[1] *La lutte électorale en* 1863.

removal of that official after the elections indicated that, with M. Clemenceau out of the way, the Minister felt that he might with impunity make an example of a functionary who had favoured him, and his successor was denounced in the organ of the defeated member as the nominee of the Bishop of Fréjus, an insinuation not calculated to smooth his path in the anti-clerical Var.

The foregoing examples demonstrate two facts: first, that the principle of interference in the elections by the central power is approved of by all the parties in the State, every group, Reactionary and Republican, having in turn profited from it; and second, that the system is under the Republic applied in a manner so undisciplined and casual as to have no effect in promoting that stability of government which would be its justification. The ephemeral character of French ministries; the confused sectional groups within the Republican party; the disappearance of a serious opposition to the Republican form of government; — all these causes have made it difficult to retain the systematic regulation of the elections in the hands of the central authority in Paris.

Although few of the Préfets remain in their posts long enough to become familiar with all the details of existence in the departments, and although the mayors are no longer nominated by the State, the former have still considerable power to bring pressure on the municipalities within their jurisdiction. The mayors of a department are under the authority of the Préfet, and, apart from the respect which all French officials have for the chiefs of the administrative hierarchy, it is greatly to the interest of their municipalities, whether poor rural communes or relatively large and prosperous towns, that they

should be on good terms with the prefecture. The acceleration of questions like those of the making of roads or of tramways depends on the good-will of the Préfet, who has the power to delay or to modify schemes of local improvement. The "dossiers"[1] relating to communal affairs are lodged at the prefecture for consideration, and at election times it is easy for a Préfet to retain them until the eve of the polls, despatching them at that critical moment to their respective communes endorsed with the prefectoral decision. An active functionary, ambitious of a reputation for administrative ability, has many occasions for supplementing the favours thus accorded to local projects. By offering occasional hospitality to the mayors and not disdaining them if they wear the blue blouse or the wooden sabots, by personally visiting the communes, and by generally establishing friendly relations with the municipalities, an adroit Préfet can, without appearing to use untoward pressure, make himself a position which, if it fall short of that of grand elector of the department, is one of commanding influence at election times.

If one of the Republican representatives of the depart-

[1] It is remarkable that this useful term has no corresponding word in English administrative terminology, although the "dossier" is produced in great abundance in the public offices in Whitehall. It is officially defined as the collection in one envelope or cover — technically called the chemise — of all the documents, correspondence, reports, etc., relating to one affair or person. The "dossiers" stored at the Prefecture of Police at Paris contain the secret biographies of many French citizens of all conditions. The extensive set of "dossiers" compiled by M. Wilson, the famous son-in-law of President Grévy, related to the lives and achievements of some of his colleagues in the Chamber and was a precious possession, which was said to account for the impunity of his return to public life. The "dossiers" referred to above have a less personal character (see vol. i. p. 143).

ment happen to be a politician of influence, a leader of a group in the Chamber, or the owner of a journal, it is sometimes more to the interest of the Préfet to cultivate his protection than that of the evanescent holder of the portfolio of the Interior ; [1] and there is no safer means of gaining promotion in the administrative career than the sagacious recognition of the quality of a candidate, even though he be not an ardent supporter of the ministry of the moment. Hence an unofficial politician may have at his disposal machinery intended to be used only in the interests of the actual nominees of the central Government. Not that the support given by the Préfet in a case like this is often at variance with the orders he receives from Paris. The central administration as a rule does not combat the candidature of an outgoing deputy, no matter to what section of the Republican party he belongs, if he have a strong position in his constituency. The Préfets of the Third Republic are disposed to recognise the personal situation of the candidate (provided of course that he be not a Reactionary), and this is how it is possible in some departments that the prefecture should support the candidature of an Opportunist in one arrondissement, of a Radical in another, and of a Socialist in a third.

Instances abound of the official favours of the prefecture being shown to one Republican candidate or group at the expense of another. In March, 1893, M. Bazille, the "Independent Republican" deputy for Poitiers, called the attention of the Minister to the electoral preferences shown by the Préfet of the neighbouring department of the Haute Vienne. At the same sitting of the Chamber,

[1] The average tenure of the portfolio of the Interior is nine months.

M. Déandréis, the Radical deputy for Montpellier, made similar complaints about the Préfet of the Hérault, who was defended by M. Mas, the member for Béziers in the same department, and it was interesting to observe that the defender of the functionary retained his seat at the general election while his assailant was beaten. In the Puy de Dôme,[1] the prefecture was in the hands of the Radical deputy for Clermont-Ferrand, M. Guyot-Dessaigne,[2] who, having been a zealous functionary of the Empire, was conversant with the traditions of official candidature, and the official representatives of the Republic had either to work with him and for him or to go elsewhere. It is needless to multiply instances. The situation was well summed up by a Republican deputy after the elections of 1893, when, in a speech to his constituents, he said : " In one department the administrative body supports the Liberal policy, in the next one the Radicals are favoured, while in another the Préfet carries out the orders of his Minister, and the sous-Préfets follow a different line. There are many functionaries, whom we know of, who are much more preoccupied about giving satisfaction to the Government of to-morrow than to the Government they represent, and this is a state of anarchy which the country wants to put an end to." When M. Félix Faure made these sound observations to his fellow-townsmen at Havre,[3] neither he nor his hearers imagined

[1] *Journal des Débats*, August 23, 1893.

[2] M. Guyot-Dessaigne had on one occasion been appointed Minister, but the Floquet Cabinet, which he was invited to join, fell a week later, in February, 1889. After these elections he was Minister of Public Works for over four months in the Radical Bourgeois Cabinet, 1895-96.

[3] November 4, 1893. When I noted this speech of the future President of the Republic, at the time it was made, I preserved it as the utter-

that in little more than a year his voice would become the most authoritative in France.

Under the Third Republic a prefecture has often been a stepping-stone to an embassy. It is not surprising, therefore, that the legitimate ambition of a Préfet should induce him to cultivate the good graces of a deputy likely to have influence to promote him. But if the only officials in a department who waited on the favour of a politician were the Préfet and his lieutenants, the evil of the system would not be extensive. M. Jules Ferry in 1863, in calling attention to the electioneering forces with which centralisation could move universal suffrage, gave a list of some of the functionaries who helped to promote the election of the candidate of the Government:—"From the rector-of-academy to the humblest village school-master; from the receiver-general of finance to the writ-server; from the manager of the Government factories to the licenced dealer in tobacco; from the post-office inspector to the letter-carrier; from the director of public domains to the road-mender; from the president of the tribunal to the gendarme and rural policeman." Now all these officials in France still depend on the central Government, and most of them are as ready now as under the Empire to play the part of political agents at election times, with the difference that owing to the instability of ministries, and to the divisions in the Republican party, they do not get their orders so directly from headquarters.

If a candidate at the present day is openly supported by the prefecture, he arrives in the communes to hold

ance of an independent but not prominent politician, who, though he had been Under-Secretary for the Colonies several times, had never been a Minister, and who seemed to represent the feelings of a commercial community rather than of governmental circles.

his meetings escorted by all the authorities — judges, tax-collectors, school-masters, and road-inspectors. If, however, he be an active Republican deputy presenting himself for re-election, and the Préfet be neutral for some reason, such as the recency of his arrival and his consequent ignorance of his subordinates, he will make his electioneering rounds accompanied by the same imposing body-guard, as though he were the nominee of the Minister of the Interior. Here arises the evil which is perhaps more demoralising than the official candidature under the Empire. The Imperial manipulation of elections, deplorable from our English point of view, was intelligible. It had for its aim the stability of the régime. The justification for modifying the free expression of the suffrage was, that a people prone to revolution needed the control of the central power in the exercise of the franchise. That idea is still inherent in the mind of the French administrative hierarchy; but under the Republic the ministries are too feeble and short-lived to direct the working of the machinery, which, preserved in all its perfection, may one day be a magnificent booty for a soldier of fortune, who, having led France to victory, may release her from the parliamentary system. Meanwhile, in default of effective ministries, the machine of centralisation is worked by other hands. The Republican deputy seeking re-election is supported in his campaign by the authorities of the cantons and the communes, whether he have the countenance of the prefecture or only its neutrality, because one-half of these functionaries owe their situations to the candidate and the other half hope for promotion if they aid his re-election.

If the Chamber of Deputies were entirely filled with paragons of virtue, their fine qualities could not survive the demoralisation caused by the amount of irregular patronage vested in the hands of parliamentary representatives, by reason of the inability to exercise it of the weak incumbents of a strong central power. There is no parish nor hamlet in France which does not contain a certain number of holders of places of profit under the Government. This legion of mercenaries, no longer organised to protect the Ministry of the day, looks to the deputy as the fountain of honour and promotion, and it seems to be an established principle in France that neither can be obtained without solicitation. Whether it be official advancement or a *bureau de tabac* that is sought, the ministers' secretaries tell office-seekers that laudatory testimonials and laudable records of service count for little without the recommendation of a deputy. So extensively is this method of solicitation encouraged that the professors who conduct the examination for University diplomas and for admission to the Military College of St. Cyr complain that the appeals they receive from the parents of candidates (indiscreet ebullitions of parental anxiety not unknown in other countries) are significantly emphasised by accompanying letters of recommendation from deputies — professors being exposed to this affront by the fact that in France they are functionaries dependent on the Government for promotion.[1]

[1] An important statement on this subject, by M. Lavisse, the eminent Academician and Professor at the Sorbonne, appeared in the *Journal des Débats* on August 2, 1893, in which instances of efforts made to bring political pressure on examiners in the performance of their duty were given with much circumstance. M. Lavisse, who is one of the highest academical authorities in France, was reported to have said: "Les mœurs

The deputy being regarded as an instrument of such utility to the electors, it is not surprising that associations are formed in the constituencies to organise the choice of the dispenser of patronage in case the sitting member die, or retire, or become unpopular. It is then that the new form of official candidature is brought into action. The local committees bear no resemblance to the party organisations in our country, notably in the peculiarity that their leading spirits, especially in rural districts, are often persons in Government employ. The *cabaret* is usually the headquarters of these associations, which are frequently presided over by the village schoolmaster, who, in his capacity of municipal secretary, is a person of political importance: and among the members are generally to be found some local officials of the Government, who perform useful but humble functions in connection with the levying of the taxes, the distribution of the post, or the maintenance of the roads.

Whatever the local features of these coteries[1] they

électorales nous envahissent. Les électeurs savent qu'on n'obtient plus rien sans le demander. Pour avoir un bureau de tabac, un avancement, une décoration, le coup de piston est utile, nécessaire même. Les bureaux de ministère disent aux solliciteurs : — Faites-vous recommander par votre député. Un dossier sans lettre de député est incomplet. Ils savent aussi les électeurs que la lettre de député est souvent plus forte que la lettre de la loi : qu'elle apaise les rigueurs de la régie, de la douane, même celles de l'autorité militaire. Il est naturel que des parents s'imaginent qu'un diplôme s'obtient comme un bureau de tabac, par prière, et qu'on entre dans une École comme dans un emploi, par faveur." Another Academician, devoted to the Republican régime, M. Jules Claretie, three years later, said that he had been condoling with a law student who had failed in his examination for the diploma, and he replied, "Il n'y a rien d'étonnant : je n'avais pas de recommandations." — *Temps*, 13 Juillet, 1890.

[1] These committees vary in name and in organisation in different regions of France, and in some parts where they are most powerful their ostensible aim is not political. In Vaucluse and in the Var, for instance,

have immense power, not merely in the nomination of deputies, but as the intermediaries and distributors of the patronage exercised by parliamentary representatives, which is not only locally considerable, but extends beyond the limit of the constituencies.[1] The combined influence of a deputy who has favours at his disposal and of the organisations which support him is such, that critics of the system declare that France has two constitutions — the written law of 1875, according to which the executive power is confided to the ministers, who are responsible before the Chambers, and to whom the members of the administrative service are subordinate; the other unwritten, whereby the executive power is exercised at Paris in the bureaux of the central departments of the State with the co-operation of members of Parliament, and in provincial prefectures under the orders of politicians.[2] The pressure brought by legis-

there exists an institution called the *chambrée*, a village society consisting of a score or so of members, sometimes several of these clubs being found in a single commune. A room is hired for the meetings, and the primary object of these clubs is said to be the cheaper enjoyment of refreshments by means of the co-operative system. No political test is required for membership, but each one usually contains a member whose strong will gives him the position of leader, and in rural France a leader of opinion is usually an active politician of advanced views. It is easy to see how, amid the political indifference of provincial life, the president of each of these societies becomes a political agent of influence, and how each *chambrée* forms a drilled body of electors under the orders of an active chief.

[1] An inquiry into the conduct of some members of the Parisian police force brought to light incidentally the remarkable fact that no fewer than sixty sergents-de-ville in the capital owed their nomination to the deputy of a provincial arrondissement whence they all came (*Journal des Débats*, 21 Octobre, 1893).

[2] M. Sébline: Sénateur de l'Aisne. *Discours en prenant possession du fauteuil de la présidence du centre gauche du Sénat*, 18 Janvier, 1894.

lators upon the transitory ministers of the day: their relations with the permanent officials who advise on the distribution of patronage: the intrigues and solicitations which prelude the nomination to any administrative post: the life of a provincial functionary harassed by his subordination to two sets of masters, his hierarchic chiefs and the unofficial band of local wire-pullers always ready to denounce him to the deputy: all these phases of French political existence are vouched for, not by disappointed Reactionaries or violent politicians of other extreme groups, but on the unimpeachable testimony of witnesses whose loyalty to the Republic is as well known as is their moderation. They show that the relations between the legislature and the administrative service are of an unhealthy character, and it is probable that the electoral practices now in vogue in France are more demoralising to the nation than was the Imperial method of conducting elections, as under the parliamentary system the democracy is not the victim but the voluntary accomplice of the evil which is wrought.

It must not be supposed that in all the constituencies of France the proceedings are identical; for while in some, like Toulouse, the unscrupulous practices of officials and of electors are abnormally frequent, in others we find Republican deputies enjoying a local popularity which would insure their election if the centralised system did not exist. But though the uniformity of the Second Empire is no longer found, there is a characteristic which survives régimes—the superiority of Government functionaries to abstract principles, and their consistency in never supporting a candidate who is unlikely to have the ear of ministers in recommending official promotions.

When the Comte Albert de Mun was member for the Morbihan I once spent some days with him in the heart of his constituency in a mountain town remote from railways, and observed the pleasant relations of the eloquent deputy with the inhabitants of every class (who were not all his supporters), as manifested by the cordiality of the greetings with which the Breton peasants hailed him in market-place or shop; until one day, driving out of the town, we met on the road a group of two or three men, not attired in the picturesque costume which lingers in that region, who passed by with averted glances, not even proffering the accustomed salute which strangers exchange on the roadside in Brittany. "These are functionaries," explained M. de Mun, "and are the only members of the population, friends or opponents, who ever treat me with incivility." And yet these servants of the State, who drew their modest salaries from the Ministry of Education or of Finance or of Public Works, had not necessarily any objection on principle to the deputy's opinions; but they were functionaries, and M. de Mun was a member of the Opposition, — in the position of MM. Jules Ferry and Gambetta or of his own kinsman, M. de Montalembert, under the Empire, and therefore to be exterminated by the weapon of centralised Government, of which, had they been old enough, they would have been the equally zealous servants under Louis Napoleon: and when the Republic has given way to some other régime they will, if they live to see that day, scowl on the Republican deputy or candidate whom they meet on their promenades around the provincial town where they may then be stationed.

VIII

It will have been gathered from the foregoing pages that the hindrances to the fair exercise of the suffrage which specially characterise French elections are not of the nature of the corrupt practices which have called for legislation in the United Kingdom. The invalidation of an election by the Chamber, being decided by party vote, does not necessarily prove that improper practices have prevailed, especially as it sometimes happens that the verdict of the committee, which has examined in detail the evidence, is reversed after an impassioned debate in the full House which knows nothing about it. Moreover, the votes of the Chamber are not given in the form of the decision of a tribunal recording that this or that specific breach of the law has been demonstrated or disproved; they merely pronounce an Aye or a No on the general question of the candidate being allowed to take his seat. Again, the testimony adduced before the committees is for the most part unworthy of the name of serious evidence. It is all unsworn, and its value and nature may be judged from an incident in the Chamber of 1885, when the power of invalidation was used in a wholesale manner, as, scrutin-de-liste being then in use, the representation of entire departments was annulled by a single vote. The committee had advised the validation of the six Monarchical deputies of the Ardèche; a Republican deputy proposed that this decision should be reversed, and in support of his argument read letters from the constituency to show that the clergy had used undue influence. "But this is mere gossip," interrupted

a member of the Right, while another asked, "Where is your proof of these allegations?" "The proof is in the signatures," replied the speaker, "the letters are all from people worthy of credence"; and solely on this the Chamber invalidated the election by a party vote.[1]

I have read a large number of the reports made on all the elections since the establishment of the Constitution of 1875, and of the debates arising out of them. They are useful as ethical studies in French provincial life, but they give the impression that irregularities are more prevalent than corrupt practices. The intervention of the clergy has been a frequent cause of the unseating of Reactionary deputies. Here and there a priest is charged with an offence heard of sometimes in Irish election petitions,—the refusal of the sacraments for political reasons; but a Frenchman who demands the sacraments when in sound health is usually an elector likely to vote on the same side as the priest without coercion. For the most part the intervention attributed to the clergy is of the nature of political activity devoid of mysticism; as even the sermons quoted in the reports are more eloquent on the unattractive qualities of the anti-clericals in this world than on the penalties they are incurring in the world to come. Indeed the acts imputed to the priests which invalidate elections, often on the vaguest hearsay evidence, are of so mild a character that if they had the same effect in our country, when practised by divines of all denominations, the House of Commons, after a general election, would contain few members but those whose seats had not been contested. The distribution of voting papers, or the posting up of placards on a

[1] Chambre des Députés: Séance du 15 Décembre, 1885.

church-building by a curé, or his giving the benediction at a public meeting, or even the delivery of a speech on behalf of a candidate, has been held by the Chamber to be undue clerical influence.

No doubt after the Seize Mai the clergy constituted a most aggressive electioneering force at the orders of the Government of the day; and in the succeeding period of bitterness, during the conflict excited by the Ferry laws, they threw themselves into it as vigorously as did their opponents. But in later years the submission to the Republic enjoined by the Vatican has been accepted by the body of the priesthood, and clerical influence, except perhaps in Brittany, cannot be regarded as an important feature of French elections at the end of the century.

The subject of bribery we shall glance at when examining that of election expenses. Treating exists to a certain extent, as testified by the expression of electoral jurisprudence, "libations at the expense of the candidate"; but in France the custom of offering inebriating beverages to obtain or to reward services is not so widespread as in the British Islands, although the signification of the word *pour-boire*, classical since the days of the Encyclopædists,[1] would favour the opposite presumption. Intemperance is unhappily increasing in France, and the *cabaret* is everywhere the headquarters of local political committees; but though the pursuit of politics leads to a large consumption of wine in the South, and of noxious spirits in regions where wine is rare, the habits thus acquired do not seem to have produced evils of the character which have called for stringent electoral legislation in our country. The best proof that neither bribery,

[1] *E.g.* D'Alembert: *Lettre à Voltaire*, 5 Novembre, 1776.

treating, nor intimidation exists in an acute form at French elections is that the legislation which penalises those unlawful acts dates from the beginning of the Second Empire,[1] and has been found to suffice for the cases that have arisen under the Republic.

The peculiar forms of corrupt practices of which we have no counterpart are the special product of centralisation; that is to say, they result from the elections being conducted under the supervision of functionaries without whose complicity they could not be used. It does not appear that they are wide-spread, and they flourish chiefly in the South, where the resources of political warfare are ardent. The most remarkable[2] in recent years are those brought to light in two localities already mentioned for their unusual code of electoral ethics, the city of Toulouse and the department of the Hérault; in both cases the evidence of the frauds committed is more trustworthy than the hearsay testimony admitted in inquiries held by the Chamber, as in the former the Government recognised them by the removal of the Préfet of the Haute Garonne, whose subordinates had favoured them, and in the latter

[1] Décret organique du 2 Février, 1852. The Empire was not nominally proclaimed till ten months later.

[2] The elections at Nice are also of a remarkable character, almost every voter having his price; but it does not seem fair to mention the Nice elections, municipal and legislative, in connection with French electoral practices, as the fixed population of that city is as little French as is the temporary cosmopolitan crowd which frequents it in the winter. The greater part of the "County of Nice" differs from Savoy — incorporated with France by the same treaty — in that its inhabitants are in language and characteristic utterly distinct from the French. One feature of the elections, legislative and municipal, is that during the electoral period ephemeral newspapers make their appearance printed in Niçois, in which language, more akin to Piedmontese than to Provençal, the peculiar practices are conducted.

M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, who was their victim, published a circumstantial narrative of the incidents which, like all that comes from the pen of that eminent economist, is of unimpeachable accuracy.[1]

We have already seen how at Toulouse the electoral lists were falsified by the municipal officials with the complicity of their colleagues of the central administration at the prefecture. A Government prosecution was ordered, and the hero of the trial was one of the accused, Mascaras by name, a characteristic Meridional, whose tale, told to the court, glowed with the local colour of the region where Languedoc meets Gascony. There were three essentials to an election, he said, the first to have a good register (the mode of fabricating which we have noticed), the second to have good votes at the poll, and the third to have a good method of counting. It would need a volume to give even an outline of all the frauds confessed to have been committed for nine years at every election, legislative, departmental, and municipal, as it was alleged that eighty-six distinct methods of fraud[2] had been practised at Toulouse. The "good register" created by the friendly concurrence of the Hôtel de Ville and the Prefecture had to be supplemented by precautions at the poll and at the counting. The municipal officials

[1] *Un chapitre des mœurs électorales en France, dans les années* 1889 *et* 1890, par Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, Membre de l'Institut.

[2] One of the more rudimentary methods, which is said to be practised occasionally all over France, arises out of the provision enacting that a voting paper bearing any exterior mark to make its identification possible, shall be null. The mayor or presiding officer has only to blacken his fingers and with them to impress vigorously the ballot paper handed to him by supporters of the candidate whom it is wished to defeat, so that at the count the black smudges may, by a liberal interpretation of the law, invalidate the votes.

were given a holiday on election days in order that they might preside at the ballot-boxes in the various polling-places, where it was their duty to insure the acceptance of the votes of palpably fictitious electors, to supplement them with ballot papers concealed on their persons, or if specially adroit to substitute these for the papers of suspected voters by a dexterous sleight of hand in their passage to the box. It was necessary also to look to the constitution of the "bureau," for if by hazard an unsympathetic or even an unskilful citizen were appointed to check the votes with the register, complications might arise at the counting. Even despite precautions, sometimes the enumeration of the ballot papers did not produce the anticipated results, and on one of these untoward occasions the secretary-general of the Mairie said to his subordinate, who testified to the saying in court, "It is for you to complete the work of universal suffrage."[1] Sometimes the work of universal suffrage was too completely perfected, and once, with the expansive exaggeration of the South, one of these patriots introduced into the ballot-box no less than 300 voting papers more than were required for the favoured candidate, and it required all the skill of the carefully selected counting committee to make the final declaration of the poll consistent with the votes checked on the register.

The method of appointing this counting committee at parliamentary elections is one of the many electoral heritages which the Republic has accepted from the Second Empire, to continue the tradition that universal suffrage is an instrument to operate under the vigilant superintendence of the central Government. By the

[1] Cour d'Assises de la Haute Garonne, 27 Novembre, 1894.

decree of 1852, the committee, which adds up the totals sent in from the various polling-places, examines the doubtful voting papers, and finally declares the result of the polls, consists of three members of the departmental council nominated for this purpose by the Préfet.[1]

In the election for the Lodève division of the Hérault in 1889, the returns from the communes gave M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu a majority over M. Ménard-Dorian, who had the support of the prefecture; but the counting committee had been selected with particular care by the Préfet, and repaired the undesired result by adding to the official candidate's total 91 votes, which the local bureaux had rejected as bad. We have seen how the majority in the Chamber, unable to condone this flagrant act, directed a local inquiry in order to postpone the unseating of the fraudulently returned deputy until the new election could take place on the new register. The Minister of the Interior, to aid the official candidate in manipulating the new lists, refused to take action at the request of M. Leroy-Beaulieu in constraining mayors who were favourable to his opponent to publish, as the law required, the decisions of the local revision commissioners. The work was so well done that M. Leroy-Beaulieu, in his elaborate narrative, containing detailed protests from a large number of communes, concludes that there were 800 names irregularly added to or struck off the electoral lists. Among the unqualified persons, who were thus made electors, were 123 labourers tem-

[1] Décret Réglementaire, 2 Février, 1852. This, like the Organic Decree, was promulgated by Louis Napoleon after the Coup d'État before he was Emperor; and the enactments for the organisation of universal suffrage which the Republic has seen good to retain, were made with a view to the plebiscite in November, 1852, which established the Second Empire.

porarily employed on a canal. On the polling day of the second election they were marched to the vote in procession by the Government surveyor, flags flying and trumpets playing, each receiving at the entrance to the Mairie a voting paper for M. Ménard-Dorian, and being accompanied to the ballot-box by an inspector of the canal.[1] Previously the administration had discharged from employment in the forests of the State a number of electors for refusing to promise to vote for the official candidate, who by these means became Deputy for Lodève.

The immense advantage possessed by a candidate who has official support makes politicians of all groups reluctant to limit by a rigid tariff the money which may be spent in furthering an election. It is not merely rich Reactionaries who wish to remain unfettered by the law in this respect. There are Radicals who declare that a certain expenditure is often the only method a candidate has of combating the influence of the prefecture. A bill was introduced in 1893, which provided that an election agent should be appointed, as in England, who should publicly attest that the expenses of his candidate had not exceeded 50 francs (£2) for every hundred electors on the register, and the frugality of the scale compared to that of the English model is significant.[2] But though it

[1] *Un chapitre des mœurs électorales.* Protestations des communes de St. Jean de Fos et de St. Pierre de la Fage.

[2] The English scale allows in boroughs £350 and in counties £650 for 2000 electors, whereas, according to this project, £40 would have to suffice if there were a constituency in France so small. For 10,000 electors the English scale allows £500 in boroughs and £1130 in counties, as against £200 according to the French scheme. It was brought forward by M. Hubbard, Radical Deputy of Seine-et-Oise, and among its supporters was a Radical-Socialist, a Boulangist, and a Bonapartist.

was supported by politicians of various opinions, it was not accepted by any section of the Republicans, and the *Justice* of M. Clemenceau joined with the *Journal des Débats* in condemning not the tariff but the principle. A writer in the Radical organ asked: "In a constituency of 14,000 electors, supposing a candidate has spent more polling-day the whole of the 7000 francs allowed, and his more sparing rival produces at the last moment a calumnious placard, or the prefecture, if it happens to be against him, uses official pressure which calls for denunciation: is he either to be without defence, or to disqualify himself by spending another hundred francs in refuting the calumny or exposing the official intrigue?"

The argument no doubt will not seem valid to English politicians, but it represents French feeling on the subject. The reason why the House of Commons decided that candidates for a seat in it should submit to undignified and vexatious restrictions, was that before their creation certain evils had become so acute as to call for restrictive remedies. But these evils are not widespread in France. As far as I can gather, of the 1800 candidates whom a general election calls before the constituencies, few exceed the modest limits which the imitators of English legislation wished to impose, and only an infinitesimal proportion ever reach the maximum scale authorised in England and Wales. A well-known Minister who, in 1893, won a hardly contested seat from the Royalists in a large constituency of 80 communes, gave me the details of his expenditure, and he did not suggest that that of his Reactionary opponent was higher. There were 24,000 electors, which, according to the tariff proposed to the Chamber, would have entitled him to spend

12,000 francs, and his expenses were only two-thirds of that sum, equivalent to £320, whereas, with an English county electorate of 24,000, he would have been entitled to spend £1970, or more than six times as much as his outlay.[1] In Paris elections are said to be more costly, but it is certain that few candidates for metropolitan seats are wealthy enough to corrupt electors with money. This, moreover, is a general reason why throughout France a lavish expenditure by candidates within the electoral period is not a public danger; and not only are they for the most part men of slender means, but at normal times there are no political organisations to give them pecuniary aid.

The enormous sums spent on elections during the Boulangist campaign must be regarded as subsidies to promote a revolution rather than as corrupt electoral expenditure. It is probable, moreover, that of the three millions of francs given by the Duchesse d'Uzès and the four millions by the Comte de Paris for electoral purposes,—more than a quarter of a million sterling from two persons alone,—a very large proportion was carefully preserved by the adventurers who surrounded Gen-

[1] The 8000 francs (£320) spent by the deputy in question (who had not then been a Minister) were roughly divided into printing, advertisements, etc., 4600 francs (£184); hire of carriages, 700 francs (£28); postage, distribution of circulars, and sundries, 2700 francs (£108). The "personal expenses" in this case were confined to the sums paid for carriages to drive about the constituency, as the candidate stayed with friends during the contest. The cost of this election was, however, high compared to that of other contests. The Sous-Préfet of Les Sables d'Olonne told me that in one division of his arrondissement where about 13,000 electors polled, the expenses of the successful Republican candidate did not exceed 1500 (£60), and that in the other division of similar size a popular but impecunious Royalist gentleman was returned for an even smaller outlay, and this was in the Vendée where party fights are keen.

eral Boulanger from being used for the corruption of the democracy. The Comte de Paris had a costly experience of providing unproductive electioneering funds, and when, after the failure of his ill-starred alliance with the Boulangists, he finally announced the reduction of his contributions to the monarchical propaganda, it was explained that the bulk of them neither directly nor indirectly had reached the electorate, having been consumed in the sustenance of the editors and owners of dull provincial newspapers without influence or even readers.

That there have been under the Third Republic elections at which excessive sums have been corruptly spent is certain, but for the reasons noted they are abnormal. There is the case of M. Daniel Wilson, the celebrated son-in-law of M. Grévy, who is said to have expended a fabulous amount on his election at Loches in 1893. It was invalidated, not by a party vote, but by the remarkable majority of 465 to 2, and the deputies possibly regretted that they had not the power to disqualify their open-handed colleague from sitting again, as the electors of Indre-et-Loire sent him back to the Palais Bourbon some weeks later. M. Wilson is, however, a unique character in French public life, and that proposition must not be taken as gainsaying the current belief that some of his censors are themselves adepts in branches of political corruption which we shall examine later; it only refers to the singular history of the simple citizen who, having caused the removal of his father-in-law from the Presidency, and subsequently endangered the existence of the Republic, established a personal monarchy in a region of Touraine, less contested than that of Louis

XI. when he encaged Cardinal la Balue in the donjon of Loches. M. Wilson's methods of maintaining the allegiance of his subjects do not resemble those with which that redoubtable sovereign terrorised his adversaries, and at election times the roads, once grim with the gibbets of Olivier le Daim, are gay with cheerful crowds of distributors of circulars and of ballot papers, several thousands of the voters being employed in that remunerative pastime on the banks of the Indre.

The generous practices which enrich that smiling valley may be regarded as purely local, though there are deputies from other districts who pay a high price for the privilege of a seat in the Chamber. A Royalist deputy in whose château I one stayed told me that the constituency which surrounded it cost him annually 100,000 francs (£4000). That, however, meant that being the possessor of several fine country residences he would not have maintained an establishment in his native department had he not been its representative; but as it returned him to Parliament he had restored his château, embellished its gardens, and keeping open house during the autumn months he put much money in circulation in a poor rural district. But though he was, moreover, a liberal benefactor of all the charities of the region, he cannot be said to have owed the tenure of his seat for twenty years to practices which the severest critic could call corrupt. The department is of monarchical tradition, its entire deputation under scrutin-de-liste having been Reactionary; but gradually rallying to the Republic it may possibly one day dispense with the services of its long-tried member in spite of his munificence.

In the early days of the Republic there was a parlia-

mentary inquiry into an election which was conducted not in a judicial spirit, as it concerned a great vote to the Bonapartists with all the dread of national disaster resting upon them. Nevertheless the distribution in the constituency of 30,000 francs (£1200) by the skilful hands of M. Rouher, then employing all his experience to popularise the name of the Prince Imperial, escaped the condemnation of the deputies who annulled the election of the Nièvre. The report, signed by several well-known Republicans, including two future Prime Ministers, MM. Jules Ferry and Jonier, said of the subsidy: "We cannot regard this remittance of money as a materially reprehensible act."[1] Now the sum of £1200 brought into a French rural constituency from outside at an election time was a relatively huge addition to the normal outlay of a candidate; and the fact that biassed political partisans, Royalist and Republican, declared that their Bonapartist opponents had the indisputable right to spend such sums as the exigencies of the struggle demanded, was a sure demonstration that the unrestricted expenditure of money in an election was not regarded as a public danger. The experience of the subsequent twenty years seems to have confirmed that opinion; and though flagrant instances of bribery may occasionally occur, there is no evidence that it is prevalent or that as a rule election expenses are not moderate.

IX

Before leaving the subject of elections we ought perhaps to glance at some of their superficial aspects, the literature that they inspire, the personal controversies that

[1] *Annales de l'Assemblée Nationale*, 1875.

arise, and the attitude of candidates one to another. In this as in all other branches of the subject it is impossible to generalise. A student of French electoral practices may witness several contests in various parts of the country and take away no other impression than that of the dulness of the fray and the indifference of the populace; or he may wander into a region where the vivacity of politicians portends local bloodshed as a prelude to civil war. The absence of party government gives a greater prominence to questions agitating the locality or to the private character of the candidates. Excepting at periods of plebiscitary movement, as in the days of Boulangism, or when Gambetta was hailed as the incarnation of the Republic, no name is ever mentioned in a parliamentary contest except that of the combatants and their supporters. I have before me copies of several ardent local journals published during the electoral period[1] of 1893 in places where controversy was most violent, and in not one of them, in endless columns of polemic and oratory, is the name of the then Prime Minister once mentioned either to praise or to blame him; nor that of the Minister he displaced, nor of any Minister or ex-Minister who had ever served the Republic except those connected with the district in which the newspaper circulated. It was the early period of the Franco-Russian understanding, but no orator ever referred its initiation to the statesmanship of this or that Foreign Minister, though a candidate would suggest to the electors that that supreme benefit to France was first conceived in the breast of the citizen seeking their suffrages.

[1] The electoral period commences from the date of issue of the Presidential decree convoking the electoral colleges; it usually appears a month before the Sunday selected for the first ballots.

Hence it happens that biographical studies of the candidates take the place which altruistic praise of programmes, parties, and statesmen has in our electoral literature. These illustrated narratives of patriotism and philanthropy describe the early struggles of the candidate or the respectability of his family: his agricultural, intellectual, or professional past: his decorations: or perchance his prisons, if he be a veteran of the Commune, or those of his kindred, if he be related to a "victim of December"; and they have their value enhanced as human documents by the candid criticism they provoke. For instance in an advanced constituency, two anti-clerical candidates outboast one another of their scorn of religious observance, and one of them records with pride that when he was married he dispensed with ecclesiastical ceremony; whereupon the commentary of his rival is that he had no choice in the matter, as the Church refused to bless his union with a divorced person. Sometimes an autobiographer takes as his theme his opponent's failings, and compares them with his own virtues, as in the following literal extract: —

"One of us is an honest man: but which? X. leads a luxurious life among princes of finance, though he is absolutely without resources, though his newspaper brings him in nothing and his relations have to support him; while I live modestly in the provinces where I have won an exceptional position at the bar. X. confesses he has not paid his debts; while I have paid the debts of others. His furniture is still unpaid for, yet he has shooting and horses. I deprive myself of these luxuries, but I owe nothing to my tradesmen."

The *Journal des Débats*, which from the days when

Marat bellowed in the *Ami du Peuple* to the graceless epoch in which we live has, under fourteen Constitutions, shown that vigorous political controversy can be conducted with refined taste, declares in general terms that electoral literature under the Third Republic is "abject"[1]: and even in the rare case where the combatants bear names not unknown, the style of their polemics is not chastened thereby. In 1893 one of the bitterest contests was that at Annonay in the Ardèche. M. de Vogüé of the Académie Française had rallied to the Republic. He was the candidate of M. Jules Roche, an ex-Minister of local birth, who in the days of scrutin-de-liste was one of the anti-clerical list in a famous election in that department, and whose patronage of a Reactionary convert stirred the wrath of his old ally of those days, M. Boissy d'Anglas. The grandson of the celebrated President of the Convention was now member for the neighbouring Drôme, but he took an hereditary interest in Annonay, which had first sent his ancestor to Versailles in 1789, and it was he who conducted the campaign against M. de Vogüé, likewise a descendant of a local deputy of the States-General. The organ of the Academician was the *Gazette d'Annonay*, that of his assailant the *Haute Ardèche*, and in the tone of the controversy carried on in those emphatic journals there is nothing to indicate the social class of the antagonists, nor is any trace to be found of the refinement of the Palais Mazarin or even of the polemics of the Revolution, which in their most violent phases were frequently classical in form.[2]

[1] August 13, 1893.

[2] The following will suffice to give an idea of the tone of the controversy. M. de Vogüé's organ denounced a writer in the rival journal in

It is probably because the political life of France commenced in the Revolution that political controversy can rarely be carried on with good-humour. There is no mean between utter indifference and bitter animosity. A gathering of electors when passions are aroused brings to men's minds reminiscences of meetings of the Clubs, the members of which, when the talking was done, did not disperse quietly to their homes, but in Paris marched to the Place de Grève bearing aloft on a pike the head of a fellow-citizen hanged on the way, or in the country sallied forth to burn a château or to sack a church. A political opponent is not, as in countries where the parliamentary system is a tradition, a fellow-creature to be treated with respect and even cordiality in the intervals of party battles, but a dangerous monster to be exterminated. The reason for this is that in France party division has signified not the constitutional struggle to gain or to guard administrative office under an unchanging sovereign power, but defence and attack of the existing régime. Hence supporters of the Government, under Empire and Republic, have looked upon members of the Opposition as conspirators against the settled order of

these terms: "Le drôle en a menti! cent témoins sont prêts à cingler du même soufflet sa face" (*Gazette d'Annonay*, 2 Septembre, 1893). M. Boissy d'Anglas took this as a personal challenge from the Academician, though it was signed by a local journalist, and himself penned the reply: "Il n'est question que de quelques pouces de fer que M. le Vicomte de Vogüé veut mettre dans mon ventre à moi: ce qu'il lui faut à ce cher collègue c'est le sang d'un député de la Drôme qui l'embête dans l'Ardèche. Il croit peut-être que c'est du sirop de groseille qui coule dans mes veines et il veut en goûter," etc. (*Haute Ardèche*, 23 Septembre, 1893). The duel did not take place for two years (November, 1895), and was remarkable as being one of the few recorded in France in this generation between two gentlemen whose ancestors might have crossed swords with one another before the Revolution.

things: while they in turn consider it legitimate to try to overturn a constitution unstable and provisional.

This mental attitude of political opponents one to another has become such a tradition of political antagonism that it survives in conflicts between supporters of the established Government. At Annonay, though the Republicanism of M. de Vogué was newly assumed, it was vouched for by an anti-clerical ex-Minister of the Opportunist group, and in other constituencies there were more striking cases of Republican inter-denunciation, where the rival candidates were of the same section of the party. If in the Ardèche M. Jules Roche was described as the agent of the Vatican because he patronised the candidature of M. de Vogue, it was not less surprising in the Var to find his former ally, M. Clemenceau, stigmatising as a Clerical his Radical opponent, a Socialist Town Councillor of Marseilles, whose public meetings were disturbed by interrupters brandishing crucifixes and rosaries to symbolise his unpatriotic allegiance to the Pope; while his partisans in turn saluted M. Clemenceau when he rose to speak with cries of "Oh yes," to indicate that he was the unpatriotic agent of England. Both suggestions were equally devoid of foundation, but nothing could be more significant of the state of party feeling in France than that two rival Radicals who wished to damage one another should bandy the charge of subservience to foreign powers, which they formerly reserved for their Reactionary opponents.

It has been worth while to consider for a moment these electioneering practices, as they display some of the causes of the failure of the parliamentary system in France. They also justify the abstention from politics

of a large proportion of the worthiest citizens; and this leads us to the consideration of a cognate subject which requires separate treatment, — the composition and character of the Chamber of Deputies under the Third Republic.

CHAPTER III

THE COMPOSITION OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

I

If the earliest associations of a foreigner among French people be among that amiable class of which the leaders bear names historic before the Revolution or taken from the battle-fields of the Empire, he will hear the character of the contemporary legislators of France described in terms of such reprobation that their unrelieved scorn will probably produce the effect which exaggeration usually has on unprejudiced minds. But when he extends his inquiries beyond that curious society which lives chiefly for amusement, he will find that this is not merely the wail of reactionary impotence, and that the bankers, the manufacturers, and the merchants of Lyons and of Bordeaux, men whose industry and intelligence are unexcelled in any modern community, tell the same story in more measured language. If, however, he be warned not to trust the testimony of capitalists regarding the elect of the democracy he may turn to another class, which has in its way of life little in common with either the frivolous or the industrious phases of opulence, and he will hear the same burden from the lips of those whose work is the greatest glory of France. Masters of the French

language; philosophers of widely different schools, like Renan and Taine; writers of romance who analyse the human products of their age and country; more practical economists who extol the first work of the Revolution; artists whose genius places them on a plane high above the interests of political strife; men of science whose instincts and education incline them to favour modern forms of government, all declare that the country which in recent times counted Guizot, Lamartine, and Thiers among its statesmen, and which more lately saw the unfulfilled promise of Gambetta, now chooses the vast majority of its parliamentary representatives from among the least worthy exponents of the life of the nation.

If the investigator have heard of the doctrine that the educated men of a community are unsafe guides in the choice of political leaders, he may, with greater difficulty, elicit the opinions of a class less accessible to a stranger than the aristocracies of intellect and of industry or the noble Faubourg. The peasantry of France has no sympathy with either of those sections of society: it forms, however, the solid fabric upon which the prosperity of the country ultimately depends, and this quality of solidity makes up for its want of ideal. If a stranger be taken into the confidence of a peasant, the latter will in the Charollais and the Beauce talk to him of his oxen and his crops; in Saintonge and in Savoy of his vines devastated by the phylloxera; in the Landes of the precarious living of the solitary resin-gatherer; but the political situation is never a voluntary topic of conversation on his lips, even on the eve of an election. If his inexpansiveness be penetrated, perhaps he may be moved to vouchsafe an opinion on the deputies of his own district,

in its mordant terseness more effective than the diffuser criticisms of the representatives of capital and culture. The most favourable view taken of a deputy by a rural constituent is that of a personage who has influence with the prefecture to improve the local highways; or who, by his sign-manual, can soften the severity of the revenue officials or even of the military authorities; or can obtain Government employment or a bureau-de-tabac for a supporter. But as these favours affect only a slender minority the ordinary peasant regards his member as a bourgeois sent by his vote to Paris to fill a lucrative situation, the profits of which are not always limited to his deputy's salary of 9000 francs, though that is a magnificent annuity in the eyes of the toiling owner of a corner of the soil.

In the days of the Panama scandal I had frequent occasion of familiar talk in rustic by-ways with the constituents of a deputy implicated in it. The peasants of this remote district are unusually expansive and ready to converse with a stranger, but while they talked with intelligent interest, even on extra-parochial matters, the wide-spread imputations on the good name of their member left them indifferent, and the most definite expression of opinion I could ever elicit was, "No doubt he is as bad as the rest of them."[1] Deputies themselves recognise that however great their individual merits they are collectively not esteemed in the country; and that the Chamber is the object of disrespect has been testified to, within and without its walls, by the most authorised

[1] The actual words used were "sans doute c'est une canaille comme les autres," a phrase difficult to translate, and perhaps too forcible to put in the text.

mouthpieces of the Republic. In its early days Gambetta, who occasionally let drop a phrase suggesting that if ever he came to power he would find as short a way with parliamentary government as did Oliver Cromwell, contemptuously applied the term "sous-vétérinaires" to the class of professional politicians which had begun to manifest itself.[1] The expression has a particular significance in France, where the practice of medicine for the ills of man and beast is associated with political aspirations rarely cherished by professors of the healing art in our country.

The phrase was revived by a Radical deputy who had had no love for its author. M. Maret, who publicly apostrophised Gambetta as "Cæsar-Vitellius,"[2] years later declared that the Chamber, becoming completely Republican, contained even worse material than that appraised by the potential dictator. "Gambetta's 'sous-vétérinaires,'" he said, "are glorious creatures by the side of these choice specimens sent to Parliament, not only by the villages, for which some excuse might be made, but by the towns and even by Paris; all intelligence is disappearing in an assembly which soon will be a mob of nullities."[3] Later a Radical Ministry being in office, he predicted that in the future "only those will try to enter the Chamber who have nothing to lose, or are so blemished that dirt has no terror for them, or are unfit for any other occupation, till the day when the

[1] M. Joseph Reinach, the biographer of Gambetta, informs me that the expression is not found in any of his published writings or utterances, but that it was a "boutade" frequently on his lips in private conversation, as others of his intimate friends have testified.

[2] Chambre des Députés: Séance du 13 Décembre, 1881.

[3] Quoted by *Figaro* from *Radical*, July 21, 1893.

boot of a successful soldier kicks out this imbecile Parliament."[1] If subsequent revelations suggested that M. Maret was an inappropriate censor of the failings of his colleagues, he was none the less for many years so esteemed a spokesman of the Republic that, as we have seen, it used its official pressure to insure his election to the Chamber which he criticised. The new school of Radicalism is equally severe, and "pourriture de parlement," the rottenness of Parliament,[2] is a favourite expression of the organ of the Extreme Left.

There is no need, however, to go to the violent press, Radical or Reactionary, for its exaggerated testimony, and the soberest representatives of the Monarchical groups are obviously not impartial witnesses in this inquiry. We will also pass by the severe judgment pronounced by authoritative voices of the Left Centre, lest it should be attributed to the exclusion from office of that party. But the Opportunists have shared with the Radicals the monopoly of power since 1880, and their appreciation of the benefactors of their group is valuable. M. Salomon Reinach is chiefly known as a man of learning, but writing in the *République Française*, when his kinsman edited the journal founded by Gambetta, his name was taken as giving a party signification to his words.[3] He complained that political life has by degrees ceased

[1] *Radical*, January 24, 1896.

[2] E.g. *Petite République*, December 25, 1895.

[3] When M. Salomon Reinach's remarkable article, "L'abstention des capacités," appeared during the election period of 1893, the *République Française* was still edited by his brother, M. Joseph Reinach, the well-known deputy, some months before it passed into the hands of the Protectionists and became the organ of M. Méline. M. Zola, three years later, writing not as a man of letters scorning politics, but as a student of his race, enunciated the same opinion. "The man advanced in years who

to have attraction for the intellectual élite of the French nation, till the vast majority of parliamentary candidates are men absolutely unknown in literature, science, or the learned professions. "We are marching," said M. Reinach, "towards a state of things like that which exists in the United States, towards the formation of a narrow caste of politicians, side by side with the abstention, growing daily more complete, of thinkers and of men who make others think."

French critics may consider that I have taken needless pains in citing Republican testimony to the character of the representative Assembly under the Republic, its failings being obvious; but a foreign observer ought not to put on record a severe appreciation of a national institution without indicating the native authorities for his judgment. This I have felt bound to do before proceeding to analyse its composition.

II

The Chamber of Deputies elected in 1893 will serve better than any other for examination, because it was chosen at a time of complete tranquillity, when no abnormal questions agitated the electorate, and under unprecedented circumstances of constitutional stability, a régime having entered its third decade of existence for the first time for a hundred years. It was moreover an important election, as the deputies chosen were to

has studied the subject is offended by the mediocrity of our political world, deputies, senators, ministers, all the personnel of the governmental machine, and exclaims, what a gulf is widening between the élite of the nation and those who govern it" (*L'élite et la Politique*, May, 1896).

form the majority of the National Assembly which would name the President under whom France would pass in the ordinary course of things from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Notwithstanding these conditions the manhood of the most civilised and intelligent nation of the Continent used its franchise in a manner to sadden the hearts of believers in democratic and parliamentary institutions.

Among the 582 deputies returned one alone had a political reputation beyond the frontiers of France, M. Léon Say, who illustrated an otherwise obscure assembly till in its third session he died, a private member, no place having been found for him in any one of the twenty Cabinets which governed the country during the fourteen years preceding his death. The Institute of France was represented by only three other of its members, and the characteristic of the Chamber was that few names on its roll conveyed any idea to the average Frenchman. It was interesting to notice that a century after the Emigration the attenuated ranks of the Right contained the chiefs of branches of the houses of Rohan and of La Rochefoucauld, or that the Revolutionary families of Casimir-Périer and Cavaignac sent members to maintain their tradition of hereditary ability. But rare examples of historic association do not suffice to give prestige to a democratic assembly, and even among the numerous ex-ministers on its benches, though several were endowed with political aptitude, not one was ranked by his countrymen as a statesman or as a popular political leader. Of the men untried in office, old and young, a dozen might be cited who had displayed ability in various capacities, without however making any impression on

the imagination of the nation. The most conspicuous in both categories will be incidentally mentioned in these pages.

Moreover, deputies who had in previous Chambers risen above the level of their colleagues were rejected with impartiality by the electors, to whatever group they belonged. The one member who had maintained in Parliament the tradition of French oratory was the Comte Albert de Mun. That gallant champion of the Church rallied to the Republic, and was deserted at the polls by the Breton nobility, who, declining to obey the admonition of the Pope, thus gave the seat to a local lawyer, supported by the official pressure of the Republic. M. de Cassagnac, the ardent Bonapartist, was a Reactionary of a very different type, turbulent, and defiant equally of Vatican and of Republic, yet a characteristic figure which an undistinguished assembly could ill afford to lose. His Radical adversary, M. Clemenceau, whose mordant eloquence had been the most redoubtable element in five Parliaments, was beaten by a Republican cabal, his place being taken by a rival Radical unknown to fame. Thus in three distant regions, in Brittany, Gascony, and Provence, three deputies who had nothing in common either in opinion or in character excepting the quality of conspicuousness, were rejected in favour of obscure candidates, though M. de Mun subsequently returned to the Chamber as member for Finistère.

The official analysis of the callings of the deputies is instructive.[1] France is a great commercial power, and

[1] These figures, put into round numbers, are taken, after independent verification, from the analysis of the Chamber of 1893, but they do not greatly differ from those of the previous Parliament, and in the case of

its Parliament is perpetually engaged in proceedings of high importance to the national trade, yet out of nearly six hundred deputies the connection of barely sixty can be traced with the commerce and industry of the country, and this number is only completed by counting publicans and retired commercial-clerks. Half of them are "industriels" (a useful term for which an English equivalent is needed, including as it does manufacturers, coal-owners, iron-masters, cotton-spinners, and similar employers of labour), and there are a score of merchants, retail tradesmen, bankers, shipbuilders, and contractors. If this be the result of the revolt of the democracy against capital, the working classes have not sent many of their own order to champion their interests, the whole complement of labour representation being ten. Even that small number is a generous computation, as the term "ouvrier" is borne by deputies in the same inexact sense as when in election addresses they boast themselves to be "sons of peasants." The most conspicuous working man in the Chamber was the late M. Thivrier, an innkeeper, who attended its sittings, his middle-class broadcloth dissimulated beneath a blue blouse, clad in which insignia of manual toil he was often seen crossing the Pont de la Concorde, as the Palais Bourbon contains no robing room, similar to that provided for the Bishops in the House of Lords, for legislators who sit in symbolical attire.

Nor is the agricultural population represented more

some of the professions they are identical. They may therefore be taken as describing the composition of the Chamber in the last decade of the century, a hundred years after the Revolution. The most significant change is the steady diminution in the class representing trade and industry, while there is no corresponding increase in labour representation in spite of the advent of the new Socialist party.

adequately. Of the 38 million inhabitants of France 24 millions are classed as rural.[1] If, therefore, half the Chamber consisted of persons interested in the cultivation of the soil, the proportion would not be excessive. But of 582 deputies less than forty are returned as following agricultural pursuits, and with the fifty described as landed proprietors (the term indicating a more modest possession of ground than when used in our country) the ninety departments of France and Algeria send to Parliament barely one member apiece to represent agricultural interests.

France is a land where persons who live on the interest of investments abound, yet less than fifty of the deputies are returned as of no occupation. It is a military nation, but no more than a score of deputies have made the army or navy their calling. The clergy are free to enter the legislature, but only two Catholic priests and one Protestant pastor sit in the Chamber.

It is the pursuit of the "liberal professions," less rigid than the Church, which most surely leads to a seat in Parliament, and more than half of the deputies are included in that vague category. The lawyers alone number 150, a hundred of them being advocates, thus continuing a tradition which high French authorities, from Napoleon to M. Taine, have declared to be the scourge of representative bodies ever since 1789, when they perorated and theorised, while at the doors of the Assembly the Revolution was turning into anarchy. The objection made by French critics to advocates as legislators is thus of a different nature from that expressed in England to the presence of barristers in the House of Commons, where

[1] *I.e.* all the extra urban population: *cf.* p. 162, note 1.

they are deemed to regard a seat as a stepping-stone to places of profit under the Crown, reserved in abundance for members of the bar. This involves continued assiduity in the pursuit of their profession, and precisely the reverse occurs when a French advocate enters the Chamber. To begin with, there are practically no appointments in France, judicial or otherwise, for which membership of the bar is an essential qualification. Moreover, the bar is the one example of a decentralised institution in France, and nearly all its members entering the Chamber are provincial advocates who leave their practice behind them when they come to Paris. Perhaps one in a hundred succeeds in migrating to the bar of the capital,[1] but the ninety-nine others never hold a brief after quitting their provincial courts, and henceforth have no other calling than that of deputy. Being usually men of slender private fortune, they are compelled to make politics their profession and means of livelihood. The practitioners in other branches of the law are in the same case,[2] and thus it is that the presence in the Chamber of a greater number of lawyers than of all the representatives of trade, industry, and agriculture put together is a sure sign of the unhealthiness of the parliamentary system in France.

After the lawyers come the doctors. Including veteri-

[1] *E.g.* M. Waldeck-Rousseau, subsequently a senator, who was Gambetta's Minister of the Interior, was a member of the bar of Rennes when, at the age of thirty-three, he was elected deputy for that city, and later he became a leader of the Parisian bar; but he retired from active politics to devote himself to his profession.

[2] Notaries and avoués, whose combined functions correspond in some respect to those of solicitors in England, are not free to practise where they please; their number in each locality is limited, and they may only practise in the place where they are licenced, and, in the case of avoués, before the tribunals to which they are attached.

nary surgeons and apothecaries, they are more numerous in the Chamber than all the deputies engaged in commerce. Except that they are not rhetoricians by profession, their undue representation in Parliament is criticised on the same grounds as that of the advocates. They also have no opportunity of plying their craft in the capital when they desert their patients to serve the nation, and they furnish the most characteristic type of professional politician. In England there is no calling in which the politics of its members are less evident than in that of the country doctor; in France there are few cantons in which a medical man is not the most active politician, and far from avoiding the party strife which divides his patients, his dispensary is often a committee-room, and his round of visits an electioneering canvass which gives him an advantage over other candidates, house-to-house solicitation of votes not being usual in France.

Of the other recognised professions that of teaching is the most fertile in legislators, of whom some, like M. Dupuy, twice Prime Minister, rise to more conspicuous heights than they would have reached had they persevered on modest academic paths. As a rule, the professor who has become deputy is not the most distinguished type of the admirable class which directs the higher instruction of France. There are usually about five and twenty former teachers of various grades in the Chamber, including village school-masters, who, in contrast to the mass of professors of secondary and superior education, are often aggressive politicians, being appointed by the Préfets as agents of the Government and not by the Minister of Public Instruction.

Of professions not officially recognised that of journal-

ism is represented by about fifty deputies, some being described as men of letters. French journalists do not occupy so high a place in the affections and respect of their countrymen as might be wished for them by members of the nation which first promoted unlicenced printing, and of all the elements in the Chamber the journalistic is least likely to revive the discredited prestige of the parliamentary system in France.

A quasi-professional class are the retired functionaries, of whom forty to fifty are usually found at the Palais Bourbon. A few of them have served in the diplomatic body, but it is the administrative service which is most fruitful in legislators. A prefecture or a sous-prefecture is an advantageous post in which to become familiar with the political machinery and wire-pullers of a region. This was the experience of M. Bourgeois, the Radical Prime Minister, who, successively secretary-general at Châlons and sous-Préfet of Reims, established such a footing in the department of the Marne that it sent him to Parliament when he had had enough of administrative life.

The analysis of the callings of members of Parliament, when compared with the census returns, shows that while five-sixths of the inhabitants of France are dependent on agriculture, industry, and commerce, only one-fifth of the deputies belong to that great majority of the population. On the other hand, more than half the Chamber is composed of members of the sparse professional class ; [1] and

[1] In round figures, France has 38 million inhabitants, of whom 17½ millions are dependent on agriculture, and 13½ millions on trade and industry. In this computation are reckoned "patrons, ouvriers, employés, familles et domestiques." By the same return less than a million of the population depend on the "liberal professions," not counting the clergy, Catholic

so far from this being a triumph of intellect over the other forces of the community, it is certain that the popular assembly contains few examples of the genius and talent which, together with the industry of the people, maintain France in the first rank of nations. This is a curious result of the free exercise of manhood suffrage. Moreover, after a quarter of a century of Republican government, the democracy, while refusing to elect parliamentary representatives from the élite of the nation, intellectual or industrial, chooses them, not from its own ranks, but, in the majority of cases, from among the least considered sections of the middle-class.[1]

III

Opinion being practically unanimous that the composition of the Chamber is not worthy of the French nation, it is obvious that its character should be frequently attributed to universal suffrage; but that theory cannot

and Protestant. It is difficult to class the ex-functionaries, as in the census returns they are not put in a separate category; but even without them, the "professional" men in the Chamber form more than half of the total number of deputies.

[1] An ingenious writer, M. Charles Benoist, has dealt with this subject since the foregoing pages were written. His figures differ slightly from mine, but his conclusions up to a certain point are the same. He, however, goes much farther than I do. He draws up a table which gives the proper proportional representation in the Chamber according to census returns. In this he works out a calculation that the "liberal professions" ought to send 13 deputies to Parliament instead of nearly 300, or if functionaries be counted in that category, they might have a total of 21 representatives. But though these tables vividly display the unrepresentative character of the Chamber, the idea of composing it in strict proportion to the occupations of the electorate is untenable.

be admitted without serious qualification. If France, during the last half century, had had a continuous history, unbroken by revolution, and if from the point when manhood suffrage was substituted for a limited franchise the character of the assembly, directly elected by the people, had deteriorated, then it might be difficult to gainsay the critics of the popular vote. But no such parliamentary evolution has taken place in France. We have to go half-way back to the Ancient Régime in order to see the results of limited franchise. No doubt when we get there we find that the parliamentarians of the Monarchy of July included some of the most illustrious men of the age; but, apart from the fiscal limitations of the franchise, the conditions of election in these later times cannot be compared with those of the days when the diligence was the swiftest means of conveyance, and the semaphore was a marvel of rapid transmission of news, which, moreover, had no cheap press for its further dissemination. Materially France under Louis Philippe had less changed since the great Revolution than it has in the same space of time which lies between these days and the Middle-class Monarchy.

Still, if we go back fifty years to the last election under limited franchise, in 1846, when railways had scarcely begun to cover the surface of France, and if we compare the lists of the final Orleanist Chamber with that of the Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage after the Revolution of 1848, we find that there was actually an increase in the number of distinguished names in that revolutionary body, elected after the most prodigious reform that ever took place in parliamentary institutions in any country, a register of 240,000 electors being dis-

placed by one of about nine millions.[1] Naturally, the suddenness of the change produced a period of disorder; but we are not examining the popular effects of improvised reform; we are looking at the electoral results of unlimited franchise, and the second act of universal suffrage was to name Louis Napoleon President of the Republic on December 10, 1848. Its next work was the election of the Legislative Assembly in May, 1849, which also abounded in eminent names. Its succeeding acts were the Plebiscite of December, 1851, consecrating the Coup d'État and in 1852 the vote for the proclamation of the Empire. It may be mentioned that at the Plebiscite approving the Coup d'État a larger number of votes were recorded than at any general election under the Third Republic.[2] No doubt inconsistency may be imputed to manhood suffrage at this period, when, in 1848, it named

[1] The number of electors inscribed on the lists for the election of the Constituent Assembly in April, 1848, was 8,220,000, but by the end of the year, for the election of President of the Republic, they had increased to nearly 10 millions, or barely half a million fewer than they are at the end of the century. Tocqueville said of the results of the elections of April, 1848, "à l'exception de M. Thiers qui avait échoué, du Duc de Broglie qui ne s'était pas présenté, et de MM. Guizot et Duchâtel qui étaient en fuite, tous les orateurs célèbres et la plupart des parleurs connus de l'ancien monde politique étaient là." — *Souvenirs d'A. de Tocqueville*, c. 5. He points out that in addition to these the Constituent Assembly contained a much greater number of large landowners and gentlemen of birth than the last Chamber of Louis Philippe, as well as a numerous group of ecclesiastics. He also describes his own election in the Manche, where his family property was, and how the Norman peasantry marched with him to the poll quite in patriarchal fashion.

[2] If it be thought that the enormous poll in favour of Louis Napoleon after the days of December, 1851, was due to pressure, that cannot be imputed to the vote which made him President of the Republic in 1848, yet on that occasion a larger number of electors voted than at the general election of 1893, though there were nearly half a million more voters on the register in the latter year than in December, 1848.

a Republican Assembly, in 1849 one in which the Royalists prevailed, and two years later signified to Louis Bonaparte that he had done right in depriving France of the services of the elect of popular franchise; but inconsistent as were these successive acts of universal suffrage, it had shown little sign that its representatives would be inferior to those elected by a handful of the population. However, manhood suffrage decided to surrender to the dictator whom it had set up its free selection of delegates, and the Empire, which was its creation, developed the system of official candidature, aided by official pressure. But when universal suffrage began to weary of the autocracy it had established, it did not assert itself by sending to the Corps Législatif a band of unknown lawyers and apothecaries; it chose, to represent it in opposition, the eloquence of Jules Favre and the authority of Thiers, or sought out the rising genius of Gambetta.

The Empire fell, and the elections terminating the war which had swept it away produced an assembly which showed that universal suffrage was capable of choosing worthy representatives at an hour of national crisis. Since the meeting of the States-General in 1789 there had never been seen in France an Assembly, legislative or constituent, containing so many men of distinction, whether of past political prestige, of rising promise, of culture, of rank, or of fortune, as that which met at Bordeaux in 1871. The names of the Duc d'Aumale, M. Thiers, Mgr. Dupanloup, Generals Chanzy and Changarnier, the Prince de Joinville, MM. Jules Simon, Léon Say, Gambetta, De Broglie, and Jules Favre give some idea of the high character of the men of opposed parties and opinions which the democracy chose at that critical

hour. The Chamber of Deputies of a quarter of a century later is in every respect an inferior body; but its deterioration cannot be traced to its origin in democratic suffrage, for the Lower House of the Constitution of 1875, which has brought discredit on parliamentary institutions, is chosen by the same franchise as the respectable assemblies of the Second Republic, as the autocratic régime of Louis Napoleon, and as the distinguished legislature of 1871.

It is necessary to dwell on this point, as there is an excessive tendency to ascribe to the admission of the people to the suffrage the deterioration of tone in political circles as well as other evils which afflict modern society. In our own country the decadence of the House of Commons is a favourite theme; but when its critics attribute the alleged decline to the extension of the franchise, they would do well to meditate on Mill's well-known criticism on certain passages of Tocqueville.[1] The French philosopher, he said, confounded the effects of democracy with the effects of civilisation, binding up in an abstract idea the whole of the tendencies of modern commercial society, and giving them one name — democracy; thereby letting it be supposed that he ascribed to equality of conditions several of the effects naturally arising from the mere progress of national prosperity. Now if it be true that the composition and the tone of the House of Commons have deteriorated, that change would seem to be due not to the approximate "equality of conditions" established by Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone in the extension of the franchise, but to the fact

[1] *Dissertations*, etc., ed. 1859, vol. ii.; *M. de Tocqueville on Democracy in America.*

that the popular Chamber reflects "the tendencies of modern commercial society." An incident which pointed to the decline of the standard of the House of Commons in the last decade of the century was the pugilistic fray with which certain members enlivened a sitting; and if I mention it, it is because I was a witness of the dismay it caused in France among the old parliamentarians who revere English institutions as a pattern for all nations. When our Members belaboured one another before the eyes of scandalised Europe, it was not because they were no longer the elect of ten-pound householders and the like, it was because they were the exponents of the new school of manners which is the outcome, not of the extension of political privileges, but of the levelling influence of the diffusion of wealth; or as Mill puts it, of "the progress of national prosperity." In the days of limited franchise, there sat in the House of Commons a retired prize-fighter, whose science would have been welcome on that ardent occasion, and he was member for a small rural borough[1] which, though enjoying a wider franchise than certain other villages, was an undemocratic constituency compared with Westminster, the representatives of whose scot-and-lot electors from Charles James Fox to John Stuart Mill were not conspicuous for their plebeian rudeness.

It is possible that if the sittings of the House of Lords were long enough to try the tempers of the peers, they might show similar symptoms of the spirit of the age, for though independent of popular franchise, they are not less amenable to the influences of civilisation.

[1] Mr. Gully, the prize-fighter, was member for Pontefract, where the franchise was based on burgage tenure.

Putting aside the too abundant elevation to peerages by both parties of undistinguished money-makers, if we take the case of one whose family has been considerable from the days of the Tudors or the Stuarts, it is evident that a noble lord who rides on a bicycle, made by a company of which he is director, is relatively an inferior creature to his ancestor who drove down to the House in a coach, wearing his star. It is certain that to foreigners he gives smaller superficial proof of England's greatness when he travels to Monte Carlo, in a sleeping-car between a tourist from Chicago and a book-maker, than did his grandfather, whose post-chaise, clattering over the pavements of Burgundy and Dauphiny, impressed the French peasantry with the grandeur of an English milord, and whetted the cupidity of Fra Diavolo. But the bicycle and the board of directors are not the products of democracy; they are, like the international express, the professional visits of the betting-man to the Mediterranean, and the ubiquity of the American citizen, signs of the progress of civilisation.

Thus it is that pessimists idealise our middle-class representative system of the first half of the Victorian epoch, forgetting that the Parliament of those days reflected the abnormally refined society of a period of transition. To a series of uncultivated old kings had succeeded a young Queen who had chosen for Consort her equal in intelligence and elevation of ideas. Society took its tone from the admirable court, which seemed to preside over an age of peace and of scientific enterprise. The introduction of railways and of cheap postage marked a new era. The fine manners of days when means of communication were slow still lingered amid modern im-

provements, while the coarse features of Georgian life were repressed by the example of the sovereign, whose influence was felt in every class throughout the land. It is difficult to believe that if the downfall of the Orleans dynasty in 1848 had had a similar influence in England to that of the Revolution of July, which expedited the Reform Bill of 1832, and had then produced another extension of the franchise, the English Parliament would have forthwith assumed the manners and practices which distress its critics at the century's end. It might have contained a few more reformers of the type of Mr. Bright and of Mr. Cobden, a few more Radicals of the type of Mr. Tom Duncombe, while the brilliant author of *Sybil* might have altered the plot of his stories, and undertaken the education of the Chartists. But that the volumes of Hansard would have suddenly lost their slimness from a premature outbreak of the diseases which latterly have swollen them, is as improbable as that quotations of Horace and other tokens of leisured decorum would have survived in the House to our uncourtly days, had a limited franchise been retained.

To the French a most impressive sign of the stability of British institutions is that, whatever the decadence of Parliament, it delegates the supreme leadership under extended suffrage to persons of precisely the same class as when the franchise was limited. Mr. Disraeli they decline to regard as the product either of English democracy or of English civilisation: to them he is an alien accident in national history as was Mazarin in France. But Mr. Gladstone, they point out, was of the same social caste and of the same academical association as Canning and Peel; Lord Salisbury, whose rule has been the chief

tangible result of the further extension of the franchise, is the head of a family which was high in the State when the ancestors of Walpole and of Chatham were obscure; Lord Rosebery, the first of the new order of Radical Prime Ministers, in origin and in tastes resembles Lord Palmerston without that statesman's popular attribute of a seat in the Lower House, in which Chamber the advanced democrats are led by Sir William Harcourt, whose birth and tradition would have entitled him to high place in the days of Rockingham and Shelburne. The twentieth century may entrust the lead of both parties to politicians of different antecedents; but we have reached its verge without experiencing in that respect[1] any marked change from the epochs when Mr. Pitt was brought into Parliament for Appleby and Mr. Gladstone for Newark.

Thus we see that the unworthy composition of the French Chamber, and the alleged decadence of Parliament in England are not due to the possession of the franchise by the democracy. The moment the principle of popular government is conceded it is difficult to vindicate any restrictions on manhood suffrage. An absolute monarchy, a military despotism, a constitutional oligarchy, can all be defended. Under the first, France became great; under the second it repaired the damage done at the upsetting of the first; under the third England kept her monarchs in order and thereby won the admiration of French philosophers. But the system we tried from 1832 was defensible only as a transitory expedient to avoid sudden change, and perhaps as a necessary method of

[1] Mr. W. H. Smith, though leader of the House of Commons, was not a party leader except in the sense in which that term could be applied to the Duke of Richmond, who was likewise the leader of a House.

educating by degrees the people to select its delegates. Both parties in the State being agreed that the putting of artificial limits on the franchise of the Third Estate ought to go the way of the pocket boroughs, it is a pity that manhood suffrage seems to be for ever unattainable in England — on the one hand maimed by the disingenuous vexations of our registration laws, on the other menaced

Amazoni a securi.[1]

But perfection is not found in human institutions: so while our nation, endowed with parliamentary instinct, complicates its franchise with costly restrictions, the French, with their admirably simple system of establishing the right to vote, have, under the Third Republic, no sense how to use it. It is in this defect that we must look for the causes why the representation of the people in the Chamber is not satisfactory.

IV

When the manhood of a nation is invested with the suffrage, the faculty of voting only becomes a force if it is directed and organised. The most obvious form of organisation is that which has for its end plebiscite or referendum,[2] that is to say the acclamation in a community, by the majority of voices, of a man to whom is dele-

[1] Hor. *Carm.* IV. iv. 20.

[2] I have used the two words in their respective modern significations, but before the revolution, *plébiscite* was used by Voltaire to describe the popular vote now called referendum, which then as now was taken on public questions in Switzerland, "Dans l'ancienne Rome, et même encore à Genève et à Bâle et dans les petits cantons ce sont les plébiscites qui font les lois." — *Lett. d'Argental*, 30 Mars, 1776. Montesquieu seems to be chiefly responsible for the word, for the Latin origin of which there is

gated the supreme power, or the approval or disapproval by that majority of a definite act or policy of the Government. There is no English equivalent for those technical terms, but the process which they connote has, in modified form, crept into usage in our country with the later extensions of the franchise, a framework being ready prepared for them to work upon in the old system of party government. For a quarter of a century after the Reform Bill of 1867 the elections were plebiscitary in character, the electorate having to decide whether Mr. Gladstone should administer the government of the country or criticise its administration. The election after his withdrawal from public life partook more of the nature of referendum, no name of equal magnitude being before the electors, who were called upon rather to pronounce for or against the policy of Irish Home Rule.

Although an election by constituencies, unlike a plebiscite in its strict sense, is affected in places by local and personal questions, it evokes the general voice of the British nation for or against a party and a policy, usually incarnated in a leader. Thus the country is divided into two political armies, each striving for the mastery, and one of the means to success is that candidates should be at the disposal of the two parties possessing qualities, such as public repute or promise, or local popularity,[1]

little classical authority. Its modern technical usage dates from the votes of 1851 and 1852 in favour of Louis Napoleon. French advocates of the referendum disclaim its plebiscitary tendency. They say that whereas a plebiscite is the abdication of the powers of universal suffrage to the hands of one man, the referendum is the permanent power to exercise the national sovereignty. All the same, referendum would inevitably lead to plebiscite in France. See p. 392 and note.

[1] A new evil menacing political representation in England has no counterpart in France, for the very reason of the small prestige of the

likely to captivate the floating mass of opinion which in Great Britain, under the party system, periodically turns a minority into a majority. If the two parties were to be broken up into independent groups, a disaster of which presages have not been wanting, the standard of the House of Commons would descend beneath that of the actual state of society. It would become, not more democratic in the proper sense of the term, for it would be less representative of large masses of the population, but more obscure. The labour of candidature, already uninviting, would lose its recompense in ceasing to confer membership of one or other of the great parties, which, despite modern modifications, are the depositaries of constitutional tradition, and even in a country where the title of Member of Parliament is respectable by the sentiment of centuries, its prestige would not survive parliamentary anarchy.

Thus in France, where no Constitution has lasted long enough to make membership of the legislature of itself a position of distinction, the parliamentary system is fated to fail till it is fortified by its essential complement, the party system. Of this there is no prospect, and it can only be approached when an election has a quasi-plebiscitary character, dividing the electorate into two camps. That of February, 1871, during the armistice after the capitulation of Paris, is the only one under the Third

legislature — the importation of rich and obscure strangers to contest constituencies. The *Times*, in a wise article after the loss of a safe Conservative seat "through the revulsion of popular feeling against such a prostitution," commenting on this subserviency to plutocracy, perhaps the gravest danger threatening modern societies, described it as "a form of corruption more subtle, though scarcely less demoralising than that which prevailed in the old rotten boroughs." — *Times*, February 4, 1897.

Republic which fully satisfied that condition; the question before the vanquished nation being the continuance of the war or the conclusion of peace, and the electorate, having issues graver to think about than jealousies of faction, chose an Assembly worthy of the solemn crisis, to liberate the territory by peaceful means. It would seem from subsequent history that nothing less than a victorious invasion would prevent the political representatives of France from breaking up into groups. For a moment after the Seize Mai the country seemed again to be ranged in two parties. But the three groups of Reactionaries combined to oppose the Republicans without coalescence, the Orleanists waiting for the Comte de Chambord's death to overwhelm the Legitimists, and the Bonapartists counting on the maturing promise of the Prince Imperial to wreck the two Bourbon factions. On the other side the Republican majority was not only divided into Moderates and Radicals, but the death of M. Thiers having marked out Gambetta as the chief to unite the sections of the party, his pre-eminence provoked jealousy instead of unity, and new divisions instead of coalition. Thus the spirit of group, never to quit the Republic, pervaded the fateful elections of 1877, and the lists of deputies then returned, in contrast to those of the Assembly of 1871, are filled with barren names; some of the older men no doubt had gone to the Senate, but the meagre achievement of the younger stock explains Gambetta's discerning scorn for the elect of the new Republic.[1]

Gambetta professed that scrutin-de-liste would produce a better class of members, and that the obscure local candidate who, by the good graces of village wire-pullers,

[1] See p. 153.

wins the suffrages of a smaller single-member constituency, would be eliminated from the lists prepared by party magnates who would select for the deputation of the department a series of names to do the party credit. But the party system, which perhaps Gambetta dreamed of, needs no such artificial means to fortify it; and tried when he was dead, scrutin-de-liste realised none of the hopes founded on it. It gave some advantage to the Reactionaries, the deaths of the Comte de Chambord and of the Prince Imperial having made them more compact; but otherwise it did not affect the composition of the Chamber, and under it the average duration of ministries actually decreased, proving that the chaos of groups was unremedied. The supervision of the character of candidates presented to departments presumes a strong party organisation at headquarters and strong leaders to direct it. But in France if a politician display the essential qualities of a party-leader and a capacity to impose his will on his followers, the cry of Dictator is raised. Thus, whatever the system of election, the candidature of those who represent the best elements of the nation is not encouraged.

Thoughtful Frenchmen whose instincts are Republican, distressed at the failure of the parliamentary system under the Republic, search for reasons to explain the unworthy composition of the representative Chamber. Most of the unsatisfactory features in French parliamentary institutions may be traced to the absence of the party system which is essential to their working; and the chronic inability of the French to produce that system is in itself a sure sign of their incapacity for parliamentary government. It may, however, be inter-

esting to consider some of the specific hindrances to the candidature and election of creditable representatives of the nation.

We have seen what a power in provincial politics are the local committees known by different names in different regions. These committees, whether in country towns or in villages, are managed not by labourers and artisans, but by petty functionaries, by small professional men, and by "petits rentiers," an unoccupied class consisting for the most part of persons of similar station to retired tradesmen in England, who, however, in many cases have never followed a calling, having inherited a competency often increased by a dowry of like dimensions and origin. The café is the usual meeting-place of these citizens, and the Municipal Council their first field of operations. If they can get possession of it, their influence (which increases in proportion to the size of the commune) becomes considerable in the canton; they name the senatorial electors of their municipality and they have to be reckoned with in the elections for the departmental and district councils.

It is interesting to observe the upward progress of a local politician. If he be a lawyer or a doctor, the first sign of his ambition is a disposition to give gratuitous consultations to his neighbours, and for such a one to have demanded fees for professional service is sometimes revived as a reproach when he has attained greatness.[1]

[1] The *Figaro* of March 26, 1896, published a violent attack on a Minister in the Bourgeois Cabinet who had been a doctor in the Charente Inférieure, based on a printed missive, come to light, which he had circulated among his patients threatening legal proceedings if they did not pay him his outstanding fees. The Minister in question was a senator, and the suggestion was made that had he been a deputy and compelled to

He has also to cultivate the social qualities appreciated by the frequenters of the political houses of call. In a commune which I know well, the village doctor was reputed the finest billiard-player that ever entered the "Pêche Miraculeuse," the headquarters of the local angling society[1] of which he was honorary president; and though the aged and the sick lamented that having independent means he rarely took the trouble to visit a patient till the certificate of decease was required, he was popular with the robust clients of the cabarets. He was thus the grand elector of the municipal council; it was to his house that the deputy came when he visited the commune, and, should that legislator ever be elevated to the Senate, the faculty of medicine may perhaps add to its long parliamentary roll the name of this rural practitioner. Meanwhile he and such as he have a large proportion of the representation of the people in their hands; and the consequent disadvantage is not merely that men of refinement and intellect who would like to enter the legislature shrink from the necessity of courting these local notables, but these magnates have an equal distaste for any one above their own level.[2] Thus

solicit the popular suffrage every four years there would have been no question of the legal summons.

[1] It is curious that the blameless pursuit of angling should in France be associated with the least attractive phases of political life. During the Toulouse election inquiry, referred to in a previous chapter, it came to light that the chief agency of corruption in that city was the "Société confraternelle des pêcheurs à la ligne," of which the president was one Cantécor, a Gascon hero only less celebrated than his colleague Mascaras.

[2] *Cf.* M. Taine's description of the political situation which followed the work of the Constituent Assembly in 1789–90: — "In each village there are five or six of those for whom politics has become a career in which they seek their personal advantage, in each market town twenty or thirty, in each city several hundreds. They are the real active citizens. They

it is that manhood suffrage gets the discredit of the composition of the Chamber, with which it has little more directly to do than in the days when the Imperial Government dictated to the people whom it should elect. In both cases the people might have asserted itself, but then as now the population of France showed by its attitude that, no matter what régime it submits to, it is not apt to exercise the privileges of parliamentary government.

Even if the local notables were disposed to favour candidates of distinction or of promise, the latter would not thereby be absolved from experiences trying even for politicians not over-fastidious. Thus M. Salomon Reinach, already cited, attributes the abstention of capable men to "the increasing brutality of electioneering practices" — the tumultuous and unseemly incidents at public meetings such as we have glanced at on a former page; the abject character of electioneering literature, in which a candidate finds every intimate detail of his private life lampooned, and so has to retaliate with like poisoned weapons; the unedifying coarseness of journalistic polemics, which, as we have seen, is not attenuated even in the rare case where a candidate is an Academician. These excuses would not be adequate if the position of deputy were a prize worth winning; for violence

alone give all their time and attention to public affairs, corresponding with the journals and the deputies in Paris, holding private committees, summoning public meetings, drawing up motions and addresses, spying on and denouncing local magistrates, starting and patronising candidates, beating up votes in the by-ways. In reward for this labour they have the power," etc. M. Taine concludes the passage by comparing this phase of the Revolution with the situation in the United States of to-day (*Révolution*, t. 1, l. 2, ch. 3).

is not characteristic of all the contested elections throughout France, very many, as we have observed, being conducted amid the profound indifference of the population. Moreover, in the period which French Liberals regard as the ideal epoch of English parliamentarism, outrage, both physical and literary, was a normal incident of our elections, braved by the scholars and gentlemen who sought to enter the House of Commons after the first Reform Act. Indeed the description left by Dickens of electoral humours of that day, stripped of caricature and transferred to a French scene with its necessary local colouring, might serve to illustrate the incidents of certain elections under the Third Republic. It is an example of the complete contrast between the two countries that in the kingdom of Louis Philippe elections under a limited franchise produced none of the violence then practised under similar circumstances on the other side of the Channel; while with extension of the franchise has come a softening of the rudeness of electoral manners in Great Britain, though the French are lamenting their deterioration under manhood suffrage.

At all events the prevalence in election contests of incidents offensive to good taste would have little terror to men of worth if a seat in the Chamber of Deputies were held in high esteem, and if it afforded a patriot, in the lofty and not the sectarian sense of the word, more opportunity of serving his country than he would find in developing his business or pursuing his studies. It is useless to analyse each explanation given of the abstention of the best men of the nation from politics, because they are nearly all derived from one source, the unsuitableness of the parliamentary system to the

genius of the French nation. No doubt the mud on the paths which lead to the Palais Bourbon has a deterrent effect on some who would like to go thither if the road were cleaner, but it is only one of a multitude of obstacles.

The situation was summed up to me by an employer of labour whose popularity among all classes in a populous district I had opportunity of judging. A small functionary of the State had, in extolling to me this good man's qualities, observed that if he would take the trouble to come forward as candidate, he could defeat the sitting member; and he added significantly that being in the service of the Government he would not have dared to make that reflection on a deputy to any one but a foreigner. The neighbour he had thus ventured to praise was of a family which during the Second Empire had been in opposition, being Orleanists of the old revolutionary school who regarded as a betrayal of their principles the submission of the Comte de Paris to the Comte de Chambord, in whom they saw the incarnation of the subsequent clerical policy of the Seize Mai. He therefore had accepted the Republic without reserve, if without enthusiasm, before the Papal Encyclical had driven unwilling Monarchists into the governmental fold. This being his position, in discussing with me the suggestion of the humble official he discoursed somewhat as follows: —

"If I stood as a moderate Republican, I should probably be returned by a small majority. In this canton I should poll nearly all the votes, both of the industrial population and of the peasants round about, who owe their prosperity to the industries I have founded. In

the other parts of the division I should get the votes of the Left Centre Republicans, and of the Reactionaries (who are not numerous in this department), excepting those of a few extreme Royalists who pray for the conversion of the Pope since his Republican encyclicals. All the clergy too would support me, but their aid would bring me little more than their own suffrages. The sous-préfecture with its official influence I should have against me, as there is scarcely a place in the arrondissement not filled by one of the nominees of the sitting deputy. In spite of that I could turn the probability of being elected into a certainty if I took the trouble to cultivate half-a-dozen lawyers, doctors, and journalists who command the majority in their cantons — a price I would not pay, even if I wished to enter the Chamber. But I do not wish to enter it, for my own sake and for the sake of the people who would send me there. For nine months of the year I should have to be constantly in Paris, and unless I neglected my affairs here it would entail fifteen or even thirty hours a week spent in the trains, which are not rapid on branch lines in France. During those nine months I should witness usually two changes of ministry, and the votes which I gave in the divisions determining the crises would alone have any influence on the affairs of the country. That would be the chief result of leaving my workpeople and my enterprises in the hands of managers. Minor consequences would be that I should be vilified and blackmailed in the journals. I should be accused of selling my vote or of buying my seat. If there were a fatal accident at my works, the Socialist organs would hold me up as an assassin. If my wife were invited to the Rothschilds', the anti-Semites would

attack her in coarse terms, and tell the priests here that they were risking their souls in voting for an apostate. Such inducements do not tempt me to neglect not only my business but the hospital, the schools, and the other institutions we have founded here. Moreover, I am mayor of the commune where my château is; there is a doctor who would like my place, and, with his election, politics would introduce their baneful influence in the municipality. Then again if I were firmly established as a Republican deputy, with no suspicion of being a Reactionary, I should become the protector of all the petty functionaries in the district. Instead of living at peace among my own people, from morning to night I should be beset by official applications and official visits: there would be the road-mender who had to complain of the road-inspector; the road-inspector who had a grievance against the sous-Préfet; the sous-Préfet who wrote to denounce a post-mistress; the post-mistress who had tales to tell about the judge of her canton; the Juge-de-Paix who had an unfavourable report to make about the conduct of a mayor; the mayor who desired the removal of the village school-master; and the school-master who wanted the violet ribbon of the academic palms for his button-hole on the 14th of July; — to say nothing of solicitations for promotion, for nomination, and for protection. It is this part of a deputy's existence which is particularly pleasing to men like the sitting member, who was a small lawyer practising in the provincial courts, or like our doctor, who wants to make the municipal council a stepping-stone to a higher place; but for people of my condition, as indeed for all men of refined feeling, whether wealthy or not, this function of petty local tyrant, of

agent of political jobbery, co-operating with a band of obscure wire-pullers, is an odious feature of parliamentary life, and is a powerful cause for deterring the fittest from entering it."

This prerogative of dispensing the patronage of the central Government vested in a deputy is most distasteful to all excepting those who abuse it.[1] It is the inevitable result of the union of two incompatibles, a centralised bureaucracy and parliamentary government. The machine constructed by Napoleon was intended to be regulated by strong and arbitrary hands, and one reason of the failure of the parliamentary system in France is that it finds itself in unnatural combination with another system which is its contradiction. It is useless to argue that it is the fault of centralised government which ought to be reformed away so as to give free scope to representative institutions. Centralisation, which flourished under the Old Régime, rose again out of the Revolution, and has been unaffected by the upheavals of this century, just as

[1] It will be generally conceded that, with rare exceptions, English members of Parliament, whether in or out of office, have in later times acquired a distaste for what is called patronage. A Minister most frequently regards his right of nomination to places of profit as a nuisance which he gladly delegates to his private secretary or to his permanent subordinates. A usage existed of delegating to local members the nomination to certain situations in the gift of the Postmaster-General, and in 1895 the House of Commons passed a resolution that the nominations thus made by the Treasury on the recommendation of members of Parliament should be transferred to the Postmaster-General. The *Journal des Débats* thought the feelings of the English legislators who passed this self-denying ordinance so curious and so laudable that it devoted an article to it, holding up for special admiration the utterance of a member who declared that the exercise of patronage by members was a disagreeable duty which created more enemies than friends. "Voilà un bel exemple de désintéressement parlementaire," exclaimed the organ of the Left Centre (February 21, 1895).

it will survive all future changes in store for France, because it suits the temperament of the French, who are not a parliamentary nation. Plebiscite they understand, and government by bureaucracy they understand, but parliamentary government they never will comprehend. This is the cause of their passive delegation of electoral powers to locate coteries, composed of the least worthy and the least disinterested elements of the population, so that the result of their legislative elections is not the spontaneous voice of the nation, save at abnormal times like 1871, when amid invasion there was no time or place for committees to spring up and take possession of the electorate.

V

One cause which might be adduced of the quality of the French legislators is the system of payment of members, but I do not think that it can so be considered. The principle that members of the legislature should be remunerated is now as rooted in French minds as is in ours the idea that Ministers should be salaried, and there is no abstract reason which would sanction the one and interdict the other. From the Revolution, when in August, 1789, the Duc de Liancourt proposed to the National Assembly that deputies should be allowed an indemnity for their travelling expenses and the cost of their sojourn in the capital, the remuneration has been officially called by that name and regarded as such rather than as a salary. Under the Consulate and the First Empire the tradition of the Revolution, of which those régimes were the later chapters, was maintained, and the delegates, who corresponded to

members of the legislature under parliamentary government, were paid. The Restoration allowed no emoluments to deputies, and the Monarchy of July continued that policy. As the gifted generation which matured between the Battle of Waterloo and the Revolution of 1848 produced the most notable series of parliamentary orators ever heard in France, the coincidence of the period of gratuitous membership with that of parliamentary excellence might seem to be one of cause and effect; but as we saw in examining the effects of extended franchise, it is not possible to take one usage of a far-off epoch and attribute to it all the characteristics of the day. The men of July were renowned parliamentarians because the marvellous renaissance after the barren season of the Revolutionary wars had inspired the French race with every intellectual faculty, original and imitative; so the peculiar genius of the epoch succeeded for a brief season in transplanting to French soil a brilliant imitation of the British Parliament, of which one of the features was the gratuitous service of members. But the receipt of a salary would not in those days have altered the character of their assemblies any more than it would have prolonged the life of an experiment as unsuited to the French temperament as it was interesting.

After the Revolution of 1848 the Provisional Government re-established the salary, and the Constitution of the end of that year consecrated the principle in an article which decreed that no representative of the people was competent to refuse it. Between the Coup d'État of 1851 and the proclamation of the Second Empire the gratuitous system was tried, but as soon as Louis Napoleon became Emperor the salary was restored by the senatus consultum

of December, 1852.[1] The National Assembly elected in 1871 at the end of the War came into existence by a decree calling into operation the electoral law of 1849, which fixed the annual emolument at 9000 francs, at which sum it has remained, there never having been any question of abolishing it even when the Assembly contained a majority of wealthy Reactionaries.[2]

It is as futile to conjecture what would be the effect of the withdrawal of the salary on the character of candidates and of deputies, as to enter into similar speculations on the possible results of the limitation of the suffrage. As long as parliamentary institutions exist in France, whatever their form or their powers, under Republic, Empire, or Monarchy, universal suffrage will be the basis for the election of the members who will not be permitted to serve without emolument. It does not, however, seem likely that the general character of the legislators would under present circumstances be materially changed if the salary were abolished. We have seen that while the deputies do not by their condition, with rare exceptions, represent the wealth, the commerce, or the culture of the country, neither do they

[1] At first under the Empire a deputy's salary was 2500 francs (£100) a month during the session, but in 1866 the fixed annual sum of 12,500 francs (£500) was substituted. The senators are relatively much less favourably treated by the Republic; they receive, like the deputies, 9000 francs a year instead of 30,000 under the Imperial régime, when they were nominated.

[2] The Commission of the National Assembly in 1875, which recommended that deputies should receive an indemnity, proposed that senators should not be paid; but the Assembly passed an amendment extending the salary to members of the Upper Chamber, the Republicans being reinforced in voting it by a number of Monarchists, chiefly of the Orleanist party, including the Prince de Joinville and the Duc d'Audiffret Pasquier (Ass. Nat. 23 Février, 1875).

represent the peasantry, the artisans, and the poorer classes. The doctors and the lawyers who commence their candidature by offering gratuitous consultations are not penniless persons. The class from which the majority of members are recruited would, in England, if taken away from its nominal professions, have no means of sustenance; but that is not the case in France, and though the £360 which a deputy receives as salary usually increases his revenue by a very considerable proportion, the instances are rare where it forms his entire income. It is not by artificial means that the level of a representative Assembly is elevated or lowered, and the most valid objection to the payment of members seems to be the additional burden which their combined salaries throw upon the tax-payer.

The primary cause of the unrepresentative character of the French Chamber — for that is the real signification of its unsatisfactory composition — is that there is no motive power latent among the French which could ever be so directed as to make them apt for parliamentary government. It is, however, not surprising that French admirers of constitutional government should recall with regret the glorious days of French parliamentarism when M. Thiers, whose fame was first made with his pen as the historian of the Revolution, declared "Writing is nothing; I would give ten of the best histories that were ever written for one good session"; and Lamartine in his enthusiasm for politics cried, "I regret the unhappy notoriety of the verses I composed in the indolence of my youth, for my real vocation is politics." But M. Thiers was soon to be banished from Parliament to resume his studies, and the poet, trespassing on the

historical as well as the political domain of the statesman, was one of the chief destroyers of the parliamentary Monarchy of July,[1] hastening its last days by his sentimental glorification of the men of the Convention.

It was during that period of ephemeral brilliancy that Tocqueville visited America, and, impressed with the high character of the statesmen then ruling France,[2] he wrote, "On my arrival in the United States I was struck with surprise on discovering how common was a high degree of merit among the governed, and how rare it was among the governing." If the illustrious philosopher could have survived to visit that country at the end of the century he would have had to develop his reflection, had he still seen fit to make it, by clearly defining the terms *governed* and *governing*, as sixty years ago the un-

[1] The "chères études" of M. Thiers formed a standing joke at his expense, as, though the above observation made in the latter days of the July Monarchy accurately expressed his belief in himself as a leader of men, after his enforced removal from affairs he used to profess a preference for the literary studies to which he was exiled. After recovering power he kept up the fiction, and when called as the first witness before the Commission on the Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale (Séance du 17 Septembre, 1871) he began by describing the reluctance with which at the elections of 1863 he quitted his "études préférées" for the Corps Législatif. Another version of Lamartine's enthusiastic exclamation is found in the *Notes inédites de M. Duvergier de Hauranne*, quoted by Thureau Dangin, *Histoire de la Monarchie de Juillet*, vol. v. c. 3.

[2] There is a letter of his written to Nassau Senior a short time after the publication of his *Démocratie en Amérique*, quoted in Thureau Dangin's *Monarchie de Juillet* (vol. ii. c. 15), dated January, 1836, shortly before the separation of Guizot and Thiers, displaying a serene confidence in the future stability of affairs as the result of the statesmanship of the first six years of the reign of Louis Philippe. After the fall of the Monarchy of July, Tocqueville, having in the meanwhile been a deputy, modified his opinion of the character and ability of the politicians who had done nothing to prevent the Revolution of 1848.

official rule of plutocracy in America had not yet begun.[1] If, however, a foreigner of his position came to France to study the nation under the Third Republic, the high degree of merit among the governed would probably not on his first arrival strike him as forcibly as would its rarity among the governing. During the early period of his studies in Paris, when he turned from the contemplation of the failure of the parliamentary system, he would behold a society given up to frivolity, and not offering that check to political scandal always in the power of a conspicuous minority, which by its life and manners affords a decent, intelligent, and dignified example. But by degrees he would perceive that though the world of fashion had no relations with that of politics, it was equally unreflective of the national character, and that the vast majority of the governed were immeasurably worthier than the politicians whom they allowed to govern them. Moreover, outside the trifling circles of the capital, in sections of society of

[1] The opening sentences of the *Démocratie en Amérique* are instructive to read in these days of monopolies and trusts and railway kings: "Parmi les objets nouveaux qui pendant mon séjour aux États Unis ont attiré mon attention, aucun n'a plus vivement frappé mes regards que l'égalité des conditions. . . . Bientôt je reconnus que ce même fait étend son influence fort au delà des mœurs politiques et des lois" (Introduction, ed. 1836). Again, later in the work, he remarks, "Si l'on me demandait où je place l'aristocratie américaine, je repondrais sans hésiter que ce n'est point parmi les riches, qui n'ont aucun lieu commun qui les rassemble," vol. ii. c. 8. Neither philosophers nor economists who went from Europe to study the United States on the eve of the railway era seem to have anticipated the peculiar social, economical, and political results about to be produced, or the political and social reign of the capitalist. Michel Chevalier visited America about the same time as Tocqueville, and his only predictions as to the consequences of the introduction of railways in the United States were that they would open up the unexplored continent, and would guarantee the maintenance of the Confederation (*Intérêts matériaux en France*, 1838).

which the opinions were more worthy of respect, and among the general public, he would find a complete indifference as to the movements in the political world and the identity of its actors, though at no period in the century has greater interest been taken in the personal attributes of men of mark.

French politicians were not always thus neglected. Without going back to the exceptional epoch of Louis Philippe, we know that after the war not only was the spare figure of the venerable survivor of that age, M. Thiers, familiar to all his countrymen, but the burly form of Gambetta, whose whole fame was made and ended in a dozen years, was equally well known. Since then the art of reproducing human features has progressed, as has also the taste of the public for details regarding the private life and habits of persons whose lineaments they recognise. But this modern species of renown is now denied to the parliamentary rulers of France. The frequenter of the Boulevards knows by sight many a celebrity never seen in Paris. He notes that the grim visage of Prince Bismarck is ageing, or that the smile of Pope Leo is enigmatic. Among his fellow-Parisians he is acquainted with the look of every comedian of the house of Molière; of the dramatists who write their plays; of the dancers at the Opera; of the sculptors who mould their forms; of the Lenten preachers at the Madeleine; and of the doctors at the Salpétrière. But if the portrait of a French statesman of the minute be presented to him without its label, he will fail to tell if it be the Finance Minister of last May, or the Keeper of the Seals in the previous Cabinet of February. It is the same in the provinces. In the country town the book-seller exposes in his window the

photograph of the President of the Republic or of the Bishop of the Diocese side by side with that of M. Coquelin, but one may scour half the departments of France without ever finding the effigy of a deputy thus honoured in his constituency.

The most devoted supporters of the Republic are fain to confess the existence of this profound indifference of the public for the lives and works of their representatives. There is no man of letters more attached to the present régime than M. Claretie, the Academician, who, as long as Republican politics were interesting, actually made Republican politicians the heroes of his romances. He has long ago ceased thus to expend his talent, and now he records the passing incidents of life in Paris as it appears to him week by week. In one of his witty chronicles he relates how another veteran of the Republic, M. Bardoux, himself a Minister in its days of promise, had said to him, "Those who read your 'Life in Paris' in days to come will find mention of authors, of painters, of actors, sometimes a word about salons, and constant reference to the world of art and letters, but never an allusion to politics and the political circles of your time,"[1] and the reproach was recognised to be as just as the omission was inevitable.

In a nation which lives under a representative system of government this is an unhealthy sign. Far better was its case even under the Second Empire, when the silence which prevailed regarding the men who directed its political destinies could be attributed to the jealous censorship of an arbitrary Government to which the nation had confided the regulation of its suffrages. That

[1] *La Vie à Paris*, Mai, 1896.

the French people, being absolutely free (subject to the limitations we have noticed), should choose representatives to legislate and to govern for whom they have scant respect, and who in their legislative capacity are incapable of inspiring popular interest, gives the impression that the parliamentary system, and consequently the régime whereof it is the basis, are provisional arrangements. For when parliamentary institutions, by reason of their composition or of their action, are not respected they cannot be regarded as permanent; and it is difficult to foresee who would protest in France if a dictator treated the deputies of the Chamber constituted in 1875 as did Louis Napoleon their more respectable predecessors of 1851.

CHAPTER IV

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AND PRACTICE

EVEN if the parliamentary system cannot be regarded as satisfactory or as permanent it is not for that reason unworthy of study; for it is instructive to observe the working of representative institutions which have failed in order to note the causes of failure. Moreover, although the parliamentary system under the Third Republic has not been successful, it has not broken down in all its details. In some matters of practice it works so well as to afford an example to even the Mother of Parliaments. Again, though the existing Chamber of Deputies was the creation of the Constitution of 1875, the rules which regulate its procedure are not the product of the experience of merely twenty years, but of four-score; as ever since the Restoration France has possessed, under some form or other, parliamentary institutions primarily modelled on the English pattern. We may therefore with advantage examine the interior economy of the Chamber of Deputies, noting what points are worthy of imitation, as well as those which display the incompatibility of a democratic parliamentary assembly with the machinery of centralisation, in a state where constitutions are not permanent.

I

The President of the Chamber of Deputies, being the third person in the official hierarchy of the Republic, has a higher precedence accorded to him than has the Speaker of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless he does not enjoy in the Chamber the consideration accorded to the First Commoner[1] in the Brit-

[1] The First Commoner of England ranks below several categories of the Commons over whom he presides, as our anomalous rules of precedence place certain commoners (sons of dukes and marquises and eldest sons of earls) higher even than certain peers. In France the only precedence accorded by the State is that given to official rank, the rules being adapted from the famous decree of Messidor, An XII. (July, 1804) which Napoleon drew up after he had become Emperor, while the Revolutionary Calendar was still in use. By it the first places, after the Chief of the State, were given to the cardinals, the ministers, the marshals, and the admirals. At the funeral of Victor Hugo in 1885, an anti-clerical fête to which the cardinals and marshals did not flock, the place assigned to the Presidents of the Senate and Chamber with their bureaux was after the ministers and high military commanders. The bureau of the Chamber protested, so the Presidents of the two Houses were promoted to walk behind the representative of the President of the Republic, but their bureaux were left in the place originally assigned to them. This called forth another protest, when the principle was laid down that the Presidents of the two assemblies cannot be separated from their bureaux. It is needless to observe that squabbles for precedence are as ardent in democratic republics as in the least enlightened monarchies. At the gala in honour of the Russian naval officers at the Paris Opera in 1893, the state-box facing that of the President of the Republic was allotted to the Presidents of the Senate and of the Chamber. The former was M. Challemel-Lacour, who, when ambassador in London, was not remarked as a rigid exponent of etiquette; but on this occasion his dignity was offended at the thought of the full height of his rank not being apparent, so he insisted on a screen being erected in the middle of the box, so as to display to the audience the inferiority of M. Casimir-Périer, then President of the Chamber. The next President of the Senate, M. Loubet, in 1897 being summoned by a Commission of the Chamber to give evidence on a matter which had occurred when he was Prime Minister, refused to go to the Palais Bourbon, so the thirty-

ish Parliament, not only because his office is lacking in historical tradition, but also because he is invested with his rank merely as the head of the annually elected bureau of the Chamber. It is this organisation which distinguishes the presidency of the French legislative assemblies from that of the House of Commons, and before examining the attributes of the President it is necessary to observe the composition of the bureau which surrounds him.

We have noted that no gathering of Frenchmen is apt for the transaction of business until a bureau has been formed. The solitary chairman of English meetings is inadequate; and thus at the opening of a session of Parliament a provisional bureau, consisting of the oldest and youngest members of the House, is solemnly formed before the election of the President and his regular bureau can be proceeded with.[1]

The President for the ensuing session is first balloted for, the election sometimes being keenly contested.[2] His annual salary is £3000,[3] and he is lodged in the Palais Bourbon. Then are chosen the other members of the bureau, to wit, four vice-Presidents, eight Secretaries,

three Commissioners had to wait on him at his residence at the Luxembourg. He told them, by way of consolation, that the President of the Chamber might do likewise if similarly summoned by the Senate.

[1] The procedure in the election of the bureau of the Senate is almost the same, and indeed the parliamentary practice of the two Houses is identical in most respects, but it is more convenient to deal with it in treating of the Lower Chamber.

[2] As in 1888, when M. Floquet resigned the Presidency to become Prime Minister. M. Méline and M. Clemenceau received an equal number of votes, the place being accorded to the former by reason of his seniority in age.

[3] He receives 72,000 francs as President, together with 9000 francs, his salary as a deputy, making a total of 81,000 francs or £3240.

and three Questeurs. The vice-Presidents are usually deputies of experience, as in the absence of the President the one of them who takes his place is invested with his full prerogatives. Four of the Secretaries have always to be in attendance in their appointed places on the tribune near the President, their duties being to supervise and to sign the minutes of each sitting, and to count the votes taken in divisions. They are frequently chosen among the younger members of the House, and one of them is usually taken from the Reactionary Opposition, but as the office is unpaid this is not a great concession to the minority.

The Questeurs,[1] as the Latin origin of their name signifies, attend to the finances of the Chamber, and have the general direction of its internal administration, all its branches being centralised in the hands of the Secretary-General of the Questure. They prepare the budget of the Chamber, which, as the deputies are paid, is considerable.[2] The office is much sought after, as the Questeurs receive double the salary of an ordinary member, and are provided with apartments in the palace.

[1] The Questeurs date from the Consulate, Frimaire, An XII. (December, 1803). From 1814 to 1851 their administrative duties in the various legislatures were similar to those now exercised by them, but under the Second Empire the President of the Corps Législatif discharged most of their functions, which somewhat resemble those of a "Chief Clerk" in an English Government department.

[2] It is also complicated, as deputies have deductions made from their pay to provide them with certain comforts. There is a small compulsory subscription for the buvette or canteen, which entitles the members to the unlimited consumption of refreshments, a discretion perhaps only possible in a temperate country like France. There is a further deduction of 120 francs a year made for the railway companies, which in return provide each legislator with a free first-class pass over all French railway systems.

The bureau, thus consisting of the President, vice-Presidents, Secretaries, and Questeurs, forms a consultative committee charged to direct the interior order of the Chamber during the session, and to act in its name should the occasion arise during the recess. It directs the reporting of the debates, it nominates the clerks, the shorthand writers, and the other officials of the House, and regulates the pay and promotion of the staff. It is also held responsible for the official reports of proceedings. If taken to task for any act within its province, it may become the subject of a debate in the Chamber, and of a vote of confidence, which, if refused, would entail the resignation of all its members, including the President.

The bureau which surrounds the President is not the only feature of his office unlike the appurtenances of the Speakership of the House of Commons. The entire conception of his position is different. He is not elected to the office by reason of his impartial temperament; the choice invariably falls upon a combatant politician who does not sink his opinions in the chair, which, on the contrary, he most often quits to assume the lead of a party. Since M. Grévy, its first occupant under the Constitution of 1875, left it to be Chief of the State, all the Presidents of the Lower House, excepting one who died in office,[1] subsequently became Prime Ministers, namely, MM. Gambetta, Brisson, Floquet, Méline, Casimir-Périer, and Dupuy; and each one save M. Méline descended straight from the chair to form a ministry. MM. Périer and Dupuy had also each the curious experience when overthrown as Prime Minister

[1] M. Burdeau.

of being forthwith re-elected to the Presidency of the Chamber which had just driven him from power.

It would be impossible for the holder of that office to be impartial with the unbiassed impartiality which is the tradition of Speakers of the House of Commons. When a régime shall have lasted in France for fifty years, then it may be regarded as permanent, and not liable to be rooted up by the victory of a party; but so long as the existence of any groups in Parliament, however ill-organised and discredited, shows that the duration of the régime is an open question in the minds of a section of the nation, so long it behooves the President of the Legislature to defend the constitution of which he is the servant. It is one of the inconveniences of unstable government that officers of the State, who, according to English ideas, ought to stand high above party, are impelled to consider themselves as defenders of the existing Government against all comers. The effect on the President of the Chamber is of a somewhat complex character. He feels it to be his duty as a guardian of the Constitution to suppress demonstrations prejudicial to the Republic, and to put at a disadvantage the deputies who make them. Thus, by an easy transition, he comes to the same attitude of mind with regard to opponents not of the Constitution but of the Government of the moment. Hence he may be charged with partiality when he feels that he is doing his duty impartially in meting out the same severity to all opponents of the Ministry, whether Republicans who desire no change in the Constitution, Socialists who wish to revise it, or Reactionaries who would upset it. This is one of the many signs that the parliamentary system requires a per-

manent and stable régime in which to flourish; moreover, the instinctive attitude of a President of the Chamber towards the persons holding office is simply the inborn reverence which every French functionary has for the central Government; while respect for parliamentary traditions is obviously an artificial sentiment in a Frenchman.[1]

If the impartiality of the President of the Chamber be not of the same quality as that of the Speaker of the House of Commons the circumstances attending the exercise of his functions are dissimilar. The ceremony observed in the two assemblies when their respective

[1] The Mother of Parliaments is regarded with such a vigilant eye by French parliamentarians that the following appreciation of the action of the Speaker of the House of Commons is worth noting. It is from an article in the *Temps* entitled "Révolution Silencieuse," of which the text was an utterance of the Speaker on the Report stage of the Agricultural Land Rating Bill, with reference to an amendment of a private member, when he observed: "I think it right to point out that the amendment gives to every person who buys an ounce of tobacco the right to appeal to Quarter Sessions" (*Times*, July 1, 1896). On this the *Temps* remarked: "M. Gully est en train de transformer du tout au tout les fonctions du Speaker et d'en faire un président de chambre continental ou américain. Au lieu d'être le juge impartial, n'intervenant qu'à la dernière extrémité, défenseur né des droits de la libre discussion, il tend à accélérer le débat, à servir le gouvernement. Enfin il vient de faire une innovation qui dépasse toutes les autres: avant de mettre aux voix un amendement il s'est permis de le réduire à l'absurde. En d'autres termes, il a pris part à la discussion, il est descendu de la sérénité de son Olympe, il a fait ce que les présidents de Chambre sur le continent ne se donnent que trop licence de faire, mais ce qui est le renversement de toutes les traditions de l'office du Speaker. Et c'est ainsi que la Chambre des Communes glisse peu à peu vers le parlementarisme imparfait ou le pseudo-parlementarisme des États à constitutions écrites et à règlements codifiés. C'est toute une révolution —une révolution plus grave que celles qui ont fait bien autrement de bruit" (*Temps*, 4 Juillet, 1896). The writer was unaware that former Speakers, such as Mr. Manners-Sutton, were less judicially neutral persons than those whom our generation has seen.

presidents enter the Chamber is perhaps characteristic of the duties expected of them. At the Palais Bourbon the President makes his entry escorted by soldiers to the roll of drums, reminding the deputies that armed force is present within the walls to execute discipline if necessary. At Westminster the Speaker takes his seat to the unheeded recital of a formal prayer to an unseen power, suggesting that moral suasion should suffice to control human passions. When the House of Commons once forgot its orderly traditions and scandalised Europe with a fray rarely paralleled in the stormiest sessions of the Convention, French parliamentarians consoled themselves by noting that the outrage took place in the absence of the Speaker, whose appearance restored the brawling assembly to calm. In the French Chamber the person of the President has no greater authority than that of either of the vice-Presidents, and if, when one of the latter was in the chair, a scene of uncontrollable violence took place he would, after exhausting all other remedies, summon to his aid not his superior but the officer commanding the military guard of the palace.[1]

The official formula describing the opening of proceedings in the English House announces that "the Speaker took the chair." In France the *Journal Officiel* does not suggest that the President assumes a sitting posture,

[1] Before proceeding to this last extremity he would put on his hat and declare the sitting suspended to give angry passions time to cool. The military have been called in on rare occasions only when this preliminary remedy has had no effect. But in any case of difficulty the vice-President would act on his own authority and not send for the President. The presence of the military at the Palais Bourbon is primarily not for the purpose of keeping order within the House, but to prevent the invasion of the Legislature by the people of Paris, which has occurred several times in the century.

possibly because during the whole of a debate arousing interest or passion he has to be on his legs. At each moment he is addressing interjectory remarks to the interrupters of the orator, and the qualities which he has to put forth are not those of a ponderous judge; he requires rather the muscular agility of a town-crier or of the conductor of an unruly orchestra as he sways his paper-knife and agitates his bell with vain supplications for silence. This constant altercation with the House does not tend to impassiveness. Hence colloquies held by the President with members of the Chamber must not be appraised as though they fell from the lips of a grave personage elevated to a position almost of majesty by the tradition of centuries, of which his venerable costume is the symbol.

The architecture of the Chamber, though not peculiar to the French legislature, does not favour a respectful attitude on the part of members towards the President. The arrangement is not unlike that of the theatre of the Greeks, the President and the orator being placed on a double stage, one tribune superposed on the other,[1] facing

[1] The suppression of the tribune for the orator is a suggestion constantly made in the French press after unusually violent scenes in the Chamber, or when the question of the rebuilding of the Palais Bourbon is discussed. The practice of delivering speeches in Parliament from a special platform dates from 1790, after the migration of the Constituent Assembly from Versailles to Paris. The arrangement favoured revolutionary oratory, and was continued through the parliamentary régimes of the Restoration and of the July Monarchy. Louis Napoleon suppressed the tribune in 1852, and during the period in which the proceedings of the Corps Législatif were not made public the members spoke from their places as in England. This was regarded as a significant act of tyranny, the legislative assembly being thus assimilated to a petty provincial council, and when M. de Montalembert first spoke in the mutilated chamber (June, 1852) the adversaries of dictatorship noted with joy that the eloquent orator did not seem

the seats of the deputies ranged in semi-circular tiers. Thus when the debater rouses the passions of the auditory (to which he addresses himself and not to the chair), its cries and gesticulations are perforce borne in the direction of the President, who, from his elevated post, must sometimes be under the illusion that they are aimed at him. To a spectator in the gallery, arriving in the midst of a tumultuous scene, the impression is that there are two actors on the platforms at bay with an angry audience in front of them, equally hostile to both. A session of the House of Commons, carried on under these architectural conditions, would probably modify the tone of the Speaker's impartiality, unless he were an automatic phenomenon, for he would find himself in the direct line of fire of the interruptions which an unpopular debater provokes. Moreover, the position of the orator face to face with his critics aggravates the temptation to interrupt, it being infinitely easier to shout and to gesticulate at an object in front of the comfortable seat of the scornful than to hurl interjections obliquely.

If therefore in stormy debates the President appears to share the brunt of the combat with the orator it is not surprising that on days of calm he should comment on the speeches when they seem to call for his emendation. With a slight modification of the position of the tribunes he might imagine himself in the place of the chorus in ancient comedy. Such was the conception which M. Floquet[1] had of the presidency. That conspicuous Republican was criticised by his countrymen with exces-

incommoded by the despotic change. In 1867 the tribune was revived as a sign of the advent of a Liberal régime.

[1] President of the Chamber, 1885–88 and 1889–92.

sive rigour, from the days when, with an ill-timed reference to French sympathy for Poland, he greeted the Tsar of Russia visiting Napoleon III. His foible was to pose before the public as the incarnation of the Revolution, and he imagined that his head resembled that of Robespierre, who would have inevitably cut it off as not a fitting adornment for a revolutionist of such anti-autocratic views. When elected President of the Chamber, M. Floquet magnified his office, not without dignity. If such a phrase may be used of an anti-clerical statesman, he pontificated before the Assembly; and when the Panama scandal drove him, perhaps rather harshly, from the tribune of the Palais Bourbon, it was felt that under a régime remarkable for the dinginess of its great men, a less picturesque figure might have been better spared. His running commentary on the speeches of deputies was one of the more genial humours of the sittings of the Chamber.[1] Thus when a Catholic orator dared to deplore the influence of freemasonry, M. Floquet rebuked him with the intimation that Pope Pius IX. was a freemason; and when shocked members of the Right demanded the authority for that *ex cathedra* statement, he referred them superbly to a popular encyclopædia more famous for its eclecticism than for its accuracy.

M. Brisson[2] is a Radical of an austerer type, whose presidential wisdom takes didactic form, as for example when on the vote for a public funeral for Marshal Canrobert he favoured the Chamber with his opinions on the

[1] On one occasion he remarked from the chair, "Si vous avez le droit d'exiger un Président impartial vous n'avez pas le droit d'exiger un Président muet," December 15, 1887.

[2] President of the Chamber, 1881–85; and from 1894.

right of soldiers to disobey their officers if ordered to take part in a *coup d'état*. Obituary discourses of less ungracious tone are part of the duty of the President, as on the decease of a deputy he is expected to announce it to his colleagues in a few well-turned sentences of regretful biography, in which party strife is forgotten; the recognition of death as a reconciler being further simulated by the selection by ballot of a deputation of members of all groups to follow the remains to the grave.

The presidency of Gambetta[1] is looked back upon with interest on account of the prestige of the man rather than of his conduct in the chair. During the three years that he occupied it, his figure was the lightning-conductor around which played all the political storms within and without the Palais Bourbon. When he was elected the clerical outrage of the Seize Mai was fresh in the memories of the victorious Republicans, who had in their ranks anti-clericals as violent in their sectarianism as the discomfited ultramontane zealots. Thus when MM. Paul Bert and Jules Ferry unfolded their laicising programmes, they were regarded by the Reactionaries as the agents of the President of the Chamber, who had denounced clericalism as the enemy. Hence it was not possible for Gambetta to leave in the chair a tradition of calm impassiveness.

His chief enemies were not, however, his outspoken Clerical and Monarchical opponents. They were of his own Republican household, and secret intrigues were plotted against him, now at the Élysée by the crafty Père Grévy, and now at the Ministry of Public Instruction, where Jules Ferry was scheming a victory other

[1] January, 1879–November, 1881.

than that he was achieving over priests and nuns.[1] At that curious period it was not to the Quai d'Orsay that the chanceries of Europe looked, while M. Waddington handed on the portfolio for foreign affairs to M. de Freycinet, and M. Barthélemy St. Hilaire succeeded those able men when the first Ferry Cabinet was formed. It was to the Palace next door, in the rue St. Dominique, that foreign statesmen turned, where the brilliant Duc de Morny had died, and where Gambetta now was not dreaming of parliamentary practice or of abrogating the Concordat. Whatever his hopes and his projects none were to be realised. He left the presidency of the Chamber to direct the brief tragi-comedy of the Grand Ministère, and by the end of another year his incomplete life had gone out in mystery in a suburban cottage at Ville d'Avray.

The remarkable power which Gambetta exercised in every department of the State while he was President of the Chamber no doubt increased his authority in ruling

[1] Certain friends of M. Ferry whose good faith is beyond question assure me that his reputed hostility for Gambetta is an unfounded legend but I cannot accept their view as mine is based on confidences made by Gambetta himself in his last years. The contrary legend of their sincerely amicable relations is due to manifold causes, some of which are mentioned in this volume (book iv. c. 6). It is natural that men who were on terms of friendship with the two statesmen, being loyal to the memory of both, should wish the belief in their mutual enmity not to be perpetuated. Moreover, it is likely enough that Gambetta took care, for obvious reasons, not to reveal to his French political friends all his secret mistrust of his Republican rivals, which he certainly did confide to other intimate ears. The public utterances of the two men on their mutual relations have no more value than similar declarations have in political circles of all countries. No one denies M. Grévy's intrigues against Gambetta, yet when they were most notorious the latter went out of his way in a speech at Tours to express his devotion and respect for the President whom he distrusted (August 3, 1881).

over that assembly at a difficult time; but it is doubtful if his tenure of the chair had a good influence on the character of French parliamentary institutions. If with the consolidation of the Republic the presidency had been bestowed on deputies willing to become professional Presidents, abandoning active politics, the parliamentary history of the Third Republic might possibly have been more edifying. The fact that Gambetta succeeded M. Grévy, promoted to be Chief of the State, at once founded a tradition that the President of the Chamber was henceforth to be the Dauphin of the Republic; and since Gambetta died every holder but one of that office, who lived to see a Congress summoned for the election of President of the Republic, has coveted its suffrages. M. Casimir-Périer alone carried off the prize, which he quickly let fall; but M. Floquet profoundly believed that there was only one step from the Palais Bourbon to the Élysée; and at each National Congress since he first presided over the Chamber, M. Brisson has been a candidate for the supreme honour.

Gambetta so far regarded the post as that of a political leader that he used to call upon himself to speak, descending to the lower tribune and ceding his chair to a vice-president, once making an impassioned speech on foreign affairs, and another time closing the debate on scrutin-de-liste[1] by a lengthy oration, to carry through

[1] May 19, 1881. On the former occasion Gambetta was, in the course of the discussion, moved to improvise a debating speech, announcing his intention with the curious formula, "Je me donne la parole." On the latter he did not take the chair at all that day, but till the time came for him to wind up the debate sat, it was observed, in the place which he had occupied in the Corps Législatif of the Empire. An amusing incident displayed the anomalous inconvenience of a President taking part in debates.

the Lower House an electoral scheme with which he identified himself. In doing this he introduced no innovation, as the faculty of taking part in debate was given to the Presidents of the Chamber under the Restoration and the Monarchy of July.[1] Since the death of Gambetta it has not been the practice for Presidents to use this right, save when their own conduct has been challenged in matters of gravity.[2]

Among the minor attributes of the President is that of advising, in conjunction with his colleague of the Senate, the President of the Republic on the choice of a new Prime Minister after the fall of a Cabinet. The usage has grown up for the Chief of the State, immediately on receiving the resignation of a defeated Minister, to summon the Presidents of the two Houses in order to ascertain their views on the situation, the President of the Chamber being highly qualified to foretell what politician has the best chances of forming a ministry likely

Annoyed by the interruptions of a Bonapartist deputy, Gambetta forgot that he was no longer in the chair and exclaimed, "M. Laroche-Joubert, je vous rappelle au silence!" and as this called forth the obvious retort, he added, "en ma qualité d'orateur."

[1] M. Dupin, the well-known President of the reign of Louis Philippe, is sometimes quoted as a model director of debates who made an excessive use of his right to take part in them. We have of course in our House of Peers the example of the president of an assembly who is a party politician taking part in debates, but the case of an unelected president of an unelected Chamber does not afford much analogy for representative assemblies, nor is the Chancellor charged with keeping order. The chief French authority on parliamentary procedure refers to the power enjoyed by the Speaker of the English House of Commons to take part in debates as an ordinary member when the House is in committee under the presidency of the Chairman (Pierre, *Traité de Droit Politique*, 917), but it does not seem to have been used since Speaker Denison's time.

[2] As when M. Floquet explained his connection with the Panama affair, December 23, 1892.

to survive for half a year. Sometimes the President of the Chamber himself undertakes the formation of a Cabinet; but in that case it is not self-seeking ambition but the pressure of others which impels him to the task, involving the exchange of the relatively calm security of the Palais Bourbon, where, without rashness, he may reckon on being left undisturbed till the Parliament's end, for the troubled tenure of the premiership, which, with almost mathematical certainty, will cease before the seasons have revolved, leaving him bereft of office and of salary, if not damaged in repute.

II

The Chief of the Executive, in a State where the principle is recognised of the sovereignty of the people, obviously has not the same powers of convoking the representative assemblies as has the sovereign in a country where the Parliament is still presumed to be composed of the three Estates of the Realm. Consequently in France it is not the President of the Republic who convokes the Chambers. They meet automatically at a fixed date in January for a session which must last at least five months,[1] and the letters of convocation are addressed to members by the Presidents of their respective Houses. If, however, the President of the Republic should deem an extraordi-

[1] L.C. du 16 Juillet, 1875. The provision that Parliament shall sit for at least five months was intended to take the place of the fiction found in some French constitutions of the permanence of the sittings of the Legislature. As a matter of practice, the Chambers sit all the year round, excepting at the ordinary holiday seasons, taking a long vacation in the summer and shorter recesses at the end of the year and at Easter.

nary session necessary, the Constitutional Law empowers him to summon the Chambers at any period of the year.[1]

At the opening of a session no ministerial declaration is made corresponding to the Queen's speech. When Gambetta was President of the Chamber it was his practice on being re-elected to pronounce an harangue, which in form and in tone had the character of a manifesto of the Chief of the State.[2] Since his time the occupants of the chair have usually been content to return thanks for their election in a patriotic discourse; and at the end of a parliament it is their practice, after reading the decree of dissolution, to sum up in vague terms the progress of the Republic since the previous general election. The Constitution gives to the President of the Republic the right to address messages to the Chambers,[3] but it is rarely exercised, and no Chief of the Executive would be tempted so to use it as to identify himself with the ministry which happened to be in office at the beginning of a session. Nor would a Prime Minister venture to announce to Parliament the programme of reforms which he intended to effect, remembering that only twice in the history of the Third Republic has a ministry in existence in January survived to the close of the year.[4] No such fear haunts British Cabinets, yet they would do well to imitate the French plan in modifying a practice which latterly has degenerated into a disingenuous flourish of a specious and impossible programme, put into the lips of a gracious

[1] If an extraordinary session be decreed in a hurry, or if a vacation be shortened for reasons of urgency, the Presidents of the Chambers summon the members by telegrams addressed to them individually.

[2] The most remarkable was his last, that of January 21, 1881.

[3] L.C. du 16 Juillet, 1875.

[4] See p. 30, note 1.

Sovereign, and with irreverent insincerity committed to the protection of the Almighty — whose name is publicly invoked in England with a levity as offensive as is the French official practice of persistently ignoring it.[1]

As there is no Queen's speech there is no address in reply to it involving lengthy and useless debate. Under the present Constitution it would be impossible to introduce this loquacious method of wasting time ; but in the days of parliamentary monarchy, when French statesmen had ever before them the English model, the practice was adopted in the legislatures of the Restoration and of the Monarchy of July of making addresses to the Crown.[2] It is another curious example of the contrast between England and France that whereas at that period the House of Commons, though its orators were of a much higher type than now, gave only a single sitting to the debate on the address, the French Chamber, likewise rich in oratory, devoted fifteen or even twenty days to brilliant tourneys of eloquence. It was under a limited franchise that French parliamentarians thus let loose their tongues, while the House of Commons became democratic before it ceased to be business-like. In renouncing a quality which before other nations is the pride of Englishmen of all classes, it has not retained its more ornate virtues, the talk which

[1] "Chaque année, quand nous lisons dans vos journaux le discours de la couronne, nous y trouvons la mention obligée de la divine Providence : cette mention arrive mécaniquement, comme l'apostrophe aux dieux immortels à la quatrième page d'un discours de rhétorique." — Taine, *Littérature Anglaise*, "Stuart Mill."

[2] In 1832, for example, Parliament met on November 19, but the address to the King in reply to his speech to the peers and deputies was not voted till December 3 (*Procès Verbal des Séances de la Chambre des Députés*).

sterilises sessions being as slovenly as it is dreary. In the comparative study of representative institutions, foreign observers are struck with the fact that in the English Parliament, to which they all look, the decay of eloquence has been coincident with the gradual breakdown of the parliamentary machine. The opposite might have been expected, as rhetoric is rarely practical and classical form is not a saver of time. But a high standard of style is a check on rash verbosity; and the obligation to express thought in well-fashioned speech deters from the slipshod facility of unstudied chatter, fatal to the expeditious conduct of affairs.

French abstract admirers of the British Parliament have a right to criticise the garrulous abuses which have grown in it around venerable forms, the failure of the parliamentary system in France being due to other causes. Even if it were now the practice of the Chamber of Deputies to raise debates on the ministerial declaration read by a new Prime Minister, not at the beginning of a session but on the formation of a Cabinet, it would be difficult to make it the subject of long discussion, as it is chiefly composed of commonplace generalities accepted by all Republicans. A ministerial declaration has been described as a mixture of an oration before a provincial republican club, and a lesson in civic duty in an elementary school;[1] but it is hard to see how

[1] *Journal des Débats* on the declaration of M. Dupuy on taking office in April, 1893. As, however, the general elections were to be in August he was wise not to make excessive promises. On meeting the new Chamber in November his statement (which is expected from the Prime Minister who has presided at the elections) was likewise of colourless character, and this also showed wisdom, as four days later he was turned out of office, though he came in again the following May. The ex-

a Minister under the Third Republic could be more definite. It would ruin the fancy of the most intrepid constructor of Queen's speeches if he knew that the average duration of a ministry was eight months, and that the best his Cabinet could hope for was to make progress with the budget and to reach the holidays without disaster.

Moreover, in France no one regards the making of laws as the primary object of the legislature. There are several reasons for this. The great reconstructor of France set up in the land which he had mastered a framework of institutions, civil and ecclesiastical, too solid to need periodical remodelling, as well as codes of laws sufficient for the wants of several generations to come. Hence during the century since Napoleon undertook his great work, the chief preoccupation of French politicians has been to decide under what régime shall be administered those laws which survive every form of government. Not that there is any lack of statutes passed every year by the legislatures which have succeeded one another under Empire, Monarchy, and Republic; but, with few exceptions, they are not of the character which in our country keeps the eyes of the nation fixed on the two parties of the state engaged in promoting and opposing definite projects. At the beginning of each session

perience of M. Dupuy is that of any other politician who is among the "ministrables" of the day. The following extract is from a political catechism published by a satirist on the occasion of another ministerial crisis:—"How is a ministerial declaration composed?" "With obscure phrases which every one can interpret as he pleases." "Give an example." "France . . . Republic . . . maintenance of order . . . Revolution . . . government worthy of the name . . . equable incidence of taxation . . . social solidarity . . . aid to agriculture . . . respect for universal suffrage . . ." etc.

the Questeurs furnish the deputies with a voluminous tract, enumerating all the measures laid before the Chamber, and statisticians publish tables to show that the number of laws and decrees promulgated under the Third Republic is annually about the same as under previous régimes.[1] At the same time one may be a careful observer of parliamentary proceedings and a constant attendant in the galleries of the Chamber without perceiving that any legislation whatever has been effected or even essayed.

The bulk of the law-making, in its strict sense, is of an uncontroversial character, and passes unnoticed. The most conspicuous of the laws, which under the Third Republic have been the subject of keen controversy, have had a quasi-constitutional character. In a country prone to political convulsion there is no gradual evolution of reform, peacefully accepted by the majority of the nation. For example, the question of the representation of the people, which for over half a century used to decide the fate of governments in England, was settled for France for all time in the streets of Paris in 1848; and there has been little legislation in connection

[1] Since the importation of the parliamentary system into France the average annual number of "acts of government" which have passed the legislature and been promulgated is calculated as follows: Under Louis XVIII., 2000; Charles X., 2600; Louis Philippe, 2000; Second Republic, 2400; Second Empire, 2500; Third Republic, 2600. These figures only show how utterly misleading are statistics not searchingly analysed. They would give the impression that the reign of Charles X. had less resemblance to that of Louis XVIII. than to the Third Republic, and that the Second Empire was a glorious epoch of parliamentary activity compared with the Monarchy of July. Still more misleading would it be to compare the foregoing with any statistics of legislation in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Most of these acts of the legislature could only be compared to provisional orders or to unopposed private statutes.

with the exercise of the franchise since Louis Bonaparte organised that Revolution for his own profit.

Thus Napoleon's great fabric of laws and institutions, supplemented by an occasional revolution, has precluded the need for constant reform-legislation; and this indeed is one cause of the failure of the parliamentary system in France; for it must necessarily become useless or dangerous if its chief occupation is not the work for which it was constructed. If we look at the largest questions which have occupied the House of Commons of late years, we shall see that in France they were finally settled in the organisation after the Revolution, in such a way as to have anticipated the dreams of reformers in England, or as to be incapable of revision without fresh revolution. Parliamentary franchise has been mentioned. The agrarian laws, which make the House of Commons devote undue time to Ireland, are not grievous to any section of the population in France, where the conditions of the occupation of the soil were definitely settled three generations ago. Local government and administration, which the House of Commons has perforce to deal with in an unscientific and piecemeal fashion without finality, were settled at the same period in France on scientific and unchangeable lines.

The relations of Church and State also were organised by the same master-hand in the concordatory arrangement, which survives régimes most antagonistic in matters ecclesiastic. There is no homogeneity of sentiment regarding the Church throughout the land, one region being attached to it, and another neglecting its ministrations. Yet no group of politicians would propose that whereas the population of Burgundy is notoriously anti-

clerical, its departments[1] never returning, out of a total of twenty-seven deputies, more than one practising Catholic, and whereas the past history of the province is separate from that of France, its inhabitants in the Morvan hills still speaking a Celtic dialect, such parts of the four dioceses of Sens, Dijon, Autun, and Belley as are contained in the ancient Duchy shall, after a given date, be independent of the Minister of Public Worship. Even a senator, in whose House questions of exclusively historical and antiquarian interest are sometimes discussed, would shrink from bringing forward such a proposition.

From this it must not be thought that there are no grievances which need redressing in France. All that is meant is that the great settlement after the Revolution anticipated ambitious schemes of legislation which might have filled a century; and for ordinary needs the unobtrusive enactments which yearly pass unperceived suffice, or indeed, in the opinion of some critics, are excessive.

The educational measures of M. Jules Ferry are an example of legislation which partook less of the nature of interior reforms, deciding the fate of ministries, than of a quasi-constitutional policy, involving the consolidation of the Republic. The clericals, under the MacMahon presidency, had declared themselves the enemies of the Republic, and the laicising of the public education of the country was the defensive retaliation of the Republicans when they came into power. With the rightfulness or wisdom of that policy we are not dealing. Its broad lines were approved by the great mass of the Republican

[1] Yonne, Côte-d'Or, Saône-et-Loire, and Ain. M. Schneider of Le Creusot has been the only Reactionary member for a Burgundian constituency for twenty years.

party, and it might have been thought that the possession of a definite policy would have put an end to the era of ministerial instability, which had been the necessary incident of a period of transition and uncertainty. Yet instead of successive ministries staking their existence on the reform of public education, they displaced one another without that reform being interrupted. M. Jules Ferry commenced his educational policy as Minister of Public Instruction in the Waddington Cabinet in 1879; he continued to hold the portfolio in the Freycinet Cabinet of 1880, which issued the decrees dissolving the unauthorised religious teaching-orders, retaining it when, on M. de Freycinet's retirement, he became Prime Minister himself. He in turn retired on a question of exterior politics, and Gambetta formed a Cabinet, making Minister of Education M. Paul Bert, who was practically the author of the "Ferry Laws." Then when the Grand Ministère had lived for two months, M. de Freycinet became Prime Minister again, and M. Ferry resumed his old place.

It is not for their steadfastness in educational policy that the Republicans deserve criticism, but because, having that definite policy which united a great majority, they displayed to the world that the French democracy was incapable of using parliamentary institutions. It was not because leaders were wanting as in later days. It was precisely because there was a popular leader that envy and division fell upon the Republicans; and their advent to power inaugurated the epoch of chaotic misgovernment which has brought discredit on the French democracy. The political ills from which France is suffering at the end of the century may to some degree be traced to

the period when the victorious Republicans split themselves up into factions rather than be led and organised by Gambetta, who died the victim of their jealousy. Hence to-day, if reform be needed, a Minister dare not inscribe it on his official programme as a measure which he will conduct through Parliament,[1] as after a few months' tenure of office he is generally dismissed for fortuitous reasons unconnected with his policy, his opinions, or his ability.

If party government could have been established in France, ministries would have had longer lives and more definite policies, so possibly they might have imbued the Chamber with the idea that the chief end of a legislature is to appear to legislate. For though for reasons just stated France does not require much legislation, nevertheless, in the development of society, new needs constantly arise which call for state-regulation. For example, the relations of capital and labour have great importance in a commercial community, and constant complaint is heard of the difficulty of obtaining legislation on urgent matters arising out of them. Thus the familiar question of Employers' Liability has been before Parliament for years without result, because, in addition to the normal conflict of opinion it excites, the Chamber has no time to legislate on the subject, as it spends its sessions in occupations unconnected with constructive law-making. As it is

[1] The only example I can find of a reform mentioned in a ministerial declaration being passed into law in the lifetime of the ministry announcing it, was in March, 1892, when M. Loubet, on taking office, expressed a hope that a law regulating the labour of women and children would be passed, as it was the following October, four weeks before M. Loubet's Cabinet was turned out. But even in this case the bill in question had been introduced before M. Loubet came in.

ordained that the French shall have a Parliament, they would do better to make less use of it as a Convention or a tribunal for the public exposure of national scandals. Even the modern British method of conducting business, with all its defects, is preferable. If a sanguine Minister in January could offer to the Chamber a catalogue of projects of law, it might at all events impel deputies to present the illusion that they were engaged in legislating for their country.

A French Minister, if he were sure of remaining in office for more than a year, could promise a long programme of measures with less disingenuousness than an English Minister displays in a Queen's speech, as excepting at the end of a Parliament, he is not limited to a single session for its achievement. Legislation before the Chamber does not lapse by the prorogation of Parliament, and with the beginning of a new session its consideration is resumed at the point where it was left. It is only a dissolution which invalidates all the uncompleted work of the Chamber;[1] but as the Senate is never dissolved, if a measure have been sent to the Upper House it can pass into law after the Chamber which gave it birth is dead, and can even be sent down to the new Chamber for further consideration should the Senate have amended it. The Senate, being partially renewed every three years, is not subject to dissolution; consequently a measure might

[1] In a memorandum on this point of procedure, supplied by the Secretary-General of the Presidency of the Chamber to an official of the Belgian Chamber, who wanted information for his deputies, regret is expressed that even at the end of a Parliament the labour of members is brought to nought; but the Secretary-General adds that the members of the succeeding legislature can make considerable use of the reports drawn up by their predecessors, in the case of measures that are reintroduced.—December 17, 1892.

remain under consideration in the Upper House for ten years, and then be passed into law without any infringement of the regulations or of the Constitution. But the Chamber displays little visible sign of being engaged in legislation, its manifest occupations being the voting of the budget and the interpellation of Ministers on subjects often of a scandalous character. We will first glance at the operations followed in the voting of the budget, as they account for the greater part of the parliamentary time.

III

The whole body of deputies is divided by lot into eleven bureaux,[1] their formation being the first act of the Chamber on meeting after dissolution or prorogation, and the operation is renewed monthly. The first work of the bureaux in the opening session of a parliament is, as we have seen, to validate the elections of the deputies; but at ordinary times their chief duty is to make a preliminary examination of projects of law laid before the Chamber. This system of dividing the assembly into bureaux is more ancient even than the Revolution, dating from the meetings of the States-General under the old Monarchy; and in 1789 the Third Estate, before it took the name of National Assembly, decided that it should resolve itself into bureaux, in which all matters of interest should be

[1] The number of bureaux into which the Legislative Chambers have been divided has differed from time to time. The existing arrangement was made by the "Règlement de la Chambre des Députés" of 1876, which gives about 50 members to each of the eleven bureaux. The Senate, which, unlike the Chamber, has a fixed number of members, 300, is divided into nine bureaux, three of 34 members and six of 33.

discussed before being submitted to deliberation.[1] It was thus as a relic of the Ancient Monarchy that Louis XVIII. imposed the system[2] on the new Chamber created by the Charter in 1814, and since then it has always been maintained under all the succeeding régimes. The division of the legislature into bureaux is regarded by publicists as the radical initial difference between the English and the French parliamentary systems. It is indeed the keystone of the French system, the whole parliamentary procedure depending on it.

The bureaux make a preliminary examination of a given project of law which is necessarily superficial, as all bills are submitted to all the bureaux. After this examination, each bureau nominates one of its number as its commissioner[3] to support the opinion of its majority in the special commission, composed of the eleven nominees of the eleven bureaux, which makes a minute study of the project in question; and it is on the deliberations and decisions of the commission thus formed that the fate of a measure practically depends.

This method of sifting and reporting on all the work of the legislature in commissions[4] no doubt accounts for

[1] June 7, 1789.

[2] Pierre, *Traité de Droit Politique et Parlementaire.*

[3] On some commissions each bureau nominates two or three members, as we shall see later. According to a regulation not always observed no member of a bureau can be nominated to serve on more than two commissions, excepting on the "Commissions mensuelles" to be mentioned hereafter. No Minister can be put on a commission, and when a deputy becomes Minister he *ipso facto* resigns from the commissions of which he is a member.

[4] I use the English word "commission" for the French *commission*, though some English writers translate it by "committee," presumably because in England the word "commission" is usually applied to extra-parliamentary bodies. But as the commissions of the French legislature

the small proportion of public debate in the Chamber on projects of law in general; but it does not at first sight account for the undue prominence of the Budget in the general discussions of the House. We must therefore for a moment notice the relative position of the various categories of commissions, as well as their way of working.[1]

There are first of all the monthly commissions which regulate questions of order and formality requiring rapid decision. The most important is that which examines all projects of law, excepting Government measures, before even they are sent for their preparatory consideration in the bureaux. The work of this commission is purely formal: that is to say, it has nothing to do with the merits or details of the bills. It simply has to report if they are of sufficient importance and of proper character to be taken into consideration by Parliament, and its duties are intended to be of a time-saving character in putting restrictions on frivolous or improper propositions. This "commission of initiative" consists of twenty-two

have little in common with our parliamentary committees, it seems to me to be less confusing to retain the word, especially as in the Revolutionary assemblies the bodies which performed somewhat different functions were called "comités." Moreover, the word *bureau* might also be translated "committee," as I have sometimes rendered it in the chapter describing the work of the "bureaux de validation"; but here as both terms are used it is better to retain the French forms. It is to be noted that the word "bureau" has two distinct senses in the French legislature, being applied to the committees here described and also to the body of members who assist the President.

[1] It is competent for the Chamber sitting in full house to nominate commissions otherwise than by the bureaux, but when this takes place it is usually not for an inquiry into a legislative project. For example, the commission to investigate the Panama affair was thus named in November, 1892, as was that of December, 1880, to inquire into the conduct of General de Cissey as Prime Minister.

members, two nominated by each bureau. Each of the other monthly commissions has eleven members, and their duties are to report on projects of departmental and communal interest, to examine petitions, and to advise on deputies' applications for leave of absence.

The commissions, in which bills before Parliament are put into order, only terminate their existence with the end of the legislature,[1] unless they have previously finished their work. In some cases this never occurs, for no limit of time being usually put on their deliberations, it may happen that a proposition which has been initiated amid factitious enthusiasm is thus allowed to die a natural death. The discussions are private, but the authors of projects of law have the right to be heard in their support. Each commission commences its operations by appointing a president, a secretary, and its most important member, a reporter; it being a rule of procedure that the work of a commission can be made known to the Chamber by the report alone.[2] The report is the official document whereby a commission submits to the Chamber its definite conclusions on a project of law considered by it. It is formed of two parts: the text of the project as adopted by the commission, and the arguments to sustain the adoption of that form. It is usual to add the objections which the minority of the commissioners may have made to it. The report thus drawn up is printed and distributed to members of the Chamber, at least twenty-

[1] It would appear that commissions in the Senate, which, as we have seen, is not subject to dissolution, are eternal; but, as the aged senators have not that quality, it sometimes happens that all the original members of a commission have disappeared before its work is done, and the Senate, therefore, has to have special rules for the renewal of its commissions.

[2] President Floquet: March 29, 1892.

four hours before the "general discussion" of the bill is placed on the order of the day. The reporter then mounts the tribune, and defends the report in a discourse, which, if the subject be important, gives a chance to the speaker of winning swift renown. With skill he may, in introducing a Government project, assume a position of greater prominence and influence than the Minister himself. It was thus that M. Paul Bert became the real author of the Ferry Education Law; for though not a member of either of the Cabinets which fathered the reform, he was the reporter of the commission charged with its examination.

To a stranger used to English parliamentary procedure and traditions, the position in the legislature of the reporters of important commissions seems to be providentially arranged to counterbalance the inconvenience of the brief duration of ministries. But the French system of commissions could not coexist in a Parliament with the party system. It can work in a simulacrum of a Parliament, as was the Corps Législatif of the Second Empire, where an arbitrary Government commanded a docile majority and named the Ministers. It is a useful expedient under the Third Republic, where the bureaux of the Chamber nominate the commissions, which work steadily, little affected by the ephemeral ministries which flit by. But with the party system it would produce deadlock and confusion, unless its initial stage were remodelled, a commission being (excepting on special occasions) the nominee of the bureaux, which are equal companies of members constituted by lot. By the freaks of chance, its majority, reporting on the most important measure before Parliament, might be in conflict with the

majority of the House and with the Ministry. In a Chamber of 600 members, divided into two organised parties, wherein the Government had a majority of sixty, if five of the eleven bureaux, by the hazard of the ballot, contained each an overwhelming majority of supporters of the Government, the other six might each contain a slenderer majority of members of the Opposition. Thus six of the bureaux with their narrow majorities might nominate six commissioners to out-vote the five named by the great majorities in the other bureaux.[1]

Before examining the constitution and operation of the Budget Commission, we will look back for a moment at the method of preparing the budget before it is submitted to that body. In the month of October the Minister of Finance performs the first act of preparation of the budget for the next year but one by applying to his colleagues for the estimates of their respective departments, which the permanent staff of the various offices proceeds to prepare. The Minister of Finance having received them, commences to adjust the public expenditure with the revenue estimates made in his own department, and it is this rudimentary draft of a budget which he presents to the Chamber of Deputies. However able, however ambitious he may be, his share in the production of the budget practically ceases here. In vain he dreams

[1] This is what practically occurred in the constitution of the Budget Commission of 1896; the hazard of the ballot put the majority of the bureaux in opposition to the Bourgeois Cabinet, which was contemplating grave fiscal changes, but as a ministry never commands a stable majority in the French Chamber the danger of an acute conflict was never very great, and the Bourgeois Cabinet followed the usual fate of its predecessors two months later. On the other hand, it sometimes happens that the Budget Commission and others of importance do not contain a single member of the Reactionary groups.

of winning the fame of a "Robert-Peel"[1] or a Gladstone; he opines that if any fragments of his budget reach the outer air of public discussion, he will no longer be at the Treasury to recognise them, and that possibly his successor will have followed in his wake.[2]

But even if the Minister of Finance remained in office long enough to see his budget pass through the Chamber, it would be as a spectator, for, as remarked M. Léon Say in his posthumous work, "The Commission deems itself a Government with its reporters as Ministers"; that being the opinion of one who had been president of the Budget Commission as well as seven times Minister of Finance. This important body consists of 33 members, three being nominated by each of the eleven bureaux. The mode of nomination is said to have special disadvantages, as if the chances of the ballot have put into one bureau a number of deputies of special competence in finance, all of them but three are perforce excluded from all share in or even knowledge of the preparation of the budget, the sittings of the Commission being secret. The secrecy of its pro-

[1] French economists, who have the greatest respect for the memory of Sir Robert Peel, invariably call him in their speeches and writings Robert-Peel, as though that had become his patronymic on the analogy of Casimir-Périer. The French treat the name of the author of *Waverley* in the same way, always referring to him as Walter-Scott.

[2] Sometimes in the history of the Republic a Minister of France has been kept on by a succession of Prime Ministers. In seven of the first fifteen ministries, from 1872 to 1882, M. Léon Say held the portfolio of finance, once being undisturbed through three successive administrations. M. Tirard lived through the Duclerc, Fallières, and Ferry Cabinets, remaining at the Louvre from 1882 to 1885. M. Rouvier similarly was Minister of Finance in the successive Tirard, Freycinet, Loubet, and Ribot Cabinets from 1889 to 1892; but though this fitful practice was of advantage to the financial administration of the country, it in nowise assimilated the position of Minister of Finance to that of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

ceedings adds a factitious importance to this body. It regards itself as an independent council, invested with powers which encroach on the prerogatives of the Chamber, whereof it is merely a delegation, and on the rights of the Executive, without incurring any responsibility. Thus the preparation of the budget has ceased in France to be an attribute of Ministers. This confusion between the right of control and the right of action, destructive of parliamentary government, is a symptom of the malady which has constantly afflicted French representatives of the people.[1] Under the present régime the answer to the particular application of this criticism is that the unstable duration of ministries makes beneficial an institution which would be pernicious in a rightly adjusted parliamentary constitution. It is impossible to get out of the vicious circle. Once more we have demonstration that the parliamentary system is unsuited for the uses of the French.

The Budget Commission, after its election by the bureaux, sets to work with resounding parade before subsiding into the mystery of its deliberations. It elects a president, two vice-presidents, four secretaries, a reporter-general, and reporters of all the sub-sections of the budget. The president is usually an ex-Minister, and frequently an ex-Minister of Finance. On taking possession of the chair he makes a speech, reported in all the journals, in which he refers to the great men who have previously illustrated

[1] In the posthumous work referred to above M. Léon Say puts this very lucidly in a sentence impossible to translate into technical English: "Si le contrôleur supprime le contrôle pour agir à la place du contrôlé, c'en est fait du gouvernement parlementaire, qui est alors remplacé par le gouvernement du Parlement; ce qui est tout le contraire" (*Les Finances*, livre i.).

the high dignity now conferred on him; he also counsels his colleagues to bend their attention to the ingenious or praiseworthy projects of the Minister of Finance. A powerful monarch, promising to consider the petition of his humblest subject, could not be more graciously affable than this private member of Parliament to the Minister presenting his budget.

Of equal importance with the president is the reporter-general; for when after months of silence the Commission produces its budget, it is he who will unfold it to the Chamber. It is he who is the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The titular Minister of Finance, whether it be he who drafted the budget or a successor, is in some respects an inferior personage, having been nominated only by the Chief of the State; whereas the real Minister, the Reporter of the Budget Commission, is the direct nominee of the representatives of the nation.[1]

The budget is divided into manifold sections each having its reporter. Not only are reports prepared of the financial situation of the great public departments, such as Interior, War, Marine, and Education, but commissioners are assigned specially to report upon the Legion of Honour, the "Mint and Medals," the Prisons, Algeria, and other channels of national expenditure; indeed, the subjects of special reports, all printed and presented to the Chamber, are so many that some of the commissioners have to undertake more than one. Among the names attached to them are found those of ex-Ministers, who

[1] The Minister of Finance is called before the Commission, which usually makes its budget coincide with the opinions elicited from him. But this does not always happen, and sometimes it would be impossible, as when two Ministers of Finance of conflicting views succeed one another during the sittings of one Budget Commission.

abound in the Chamber, and of other veteran politicians; but not a few are unknown before their inclusion in the Budget Commission. Here is a powerful cause why the system survives criticism. If a young deputy can induce his bureau to nominate him, he starts on his political career with chances similar to those enjoyed by an engineer in his profession who has passed out of the École Polytechnique with a high number. But not only is it a certificate of capacity, of peculiar virtue in a Parliament which gives office to six sets of Ministers in its life of four years; it also is an opportunity for scanning the mechanism of the administrative departments, the commissions being armed with inquisitory powers which put the whole public service in their ken.

It is natural that persons endowed with such high functions should not hurry over their work, so the spring and the summer pass by, and long before the recess is over the Commission is at work again. What it does during all those months is only disclosed by the revelations of its members, its proceedings being as secret as those of the conclave of cardinals which elects a new Pope; only the result of its work is made known. We know indeed that the commissioners write books on the administration of the departments confided to their respective inquest, their voluminous reports going far beyond purely financial questions. At all events, when the autumn session arrives, the Chamber has before it, in the place of the budget prepared by the Minister a year before, a new budget presented by the Reporter-General, so complicated that few deputies who were not on the Commission ever master its details. But the expenditure of a State does not halt while ambitious legislators indite essays on ad-

ministration; so the Chamber, commencing its tardy discussion and examination of the budget which will drag over into the ensuing session before it is sent up to the Senate, has to provide for the approaching year with unscientific votes on account.

Delay is not the only evil which results from the time wasted in the investigations of the Commission. Its members, each considering that he has a mandate to reform the department on which he reports, conceive that they are competent to modify the organic laws of the country by means of the budget. For example, the reporter on the Ministry of Justice may deem that the judges of the Court of Appeal are too numerous, so he writes an elaborate treatise in support of his idea, calculated to rank him as a great judicial reformer. Supposing his fellow commissioners accept his conclusions and recommend the suppression of the judgeships, they will be abolished by the effect of a line in the Finance Act, if the Chambers agree with that part of the report of the Commission. French critics of this sweeping power admire the English system of "a twofold budget, the one established in permanency, the other liable to annual discussion and modification,"[1] — the charges laid by statute on our Consolidated Fund, including the Civil List and the judges' salaries, not being annually voted, and not being liable to suppression without special legislation. It has been forcibly pointed out that the Commission of the Budget is competent to remodel the whole military system of France, as by suppressing the pay and maintenance of the troops in their third year in the ranks, it could reduce the term of compulsory service from three

[1] M. Jules Ferry: Sénat, 20 Mars, 1885.

to two years.[1] As the Chamber accepts from the Commission most of the articles of its budget, the controlling power of the Upper Chamber in financial matters, rarely though it is used, provides a certain check on the misuse of this power.

Another evil, which is in practice much more serious, is of contrary effect. The custom of increasing the estimates during their passage through the Chamber is not essentially a result of the refashioning of the budget by a commission; but the system undoubtedly is one of the chief causes of the improvident finance of the Third Republic. An irresponsible deputy who makes of his report to the Commission a manifesto displaying his genius for administration, finds it easier to advise expenditure than retrenchment. In the budget referred to, in which the Commission recommended the abolition of certain judicial posts, it had at the same time increased the votes for other branches of the judicature; and the spectacle was witnessed, in the Chamber, of the Reporter of the Commission advocating an increase of expense in the maintenance of certain tribunals which the Minister of Justice on behalf of his own department declared was not necessary.[2] Thus the Reporter of the Budget Commission, though he assumes the powers of a Chancellor of the Exchequer, appreciates the tenor of his duties in a precisely opposite sense.

The suppression of parliamentary initiative in the opening of fresh credits would, it is argued, be a limita-

[1] M. J. Reinach: Ch. des Députés, 25 Novembre, 1895. The following year the report of the Budget Commission on the Ministry of War proposed the fusion of the staffs of the Engineers and Artillery — a reform of most technical character.

[2] Ch. des Députés: 6 Décembre, 1895.

tion of the rights of the sovereignty of the people;[1] but meanwhile that specious theory is leading the public finances of France to a condition which would bring a less rich country and a less industrious nation to bankruptcy. Millions of the national wealth are thus squandered by each Parliament on the creation of superfluous posts in a land already overburdened with functionaries, and on public works designed only to advance the local popularity of their promoters. The majority offers no opposition, as deputies vote with reciprocal comity for one another's prodigalities. The Government makes little effort to restrain them, as ministerial responsibility before the electorate for extravagance is unknown in a Parliament where the party system has no place, and where half-a-dozen cabinets succeed one another between two general elections. The Senate, indeed, annually emits an academic groan over these practices, but rarely risks its calm by using its power of veto.

All the great native authorities on finance, of every shade of political opinion, from M. Léon Say to M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, have uttered the gravest notes of warning; and no words of an English statesman have been more often quoted of late years in France than those of Mr. Gladstone, when he laid down, in 1866, the sound

[1] In 1893 M. W. H. Waddington, soon after his resignation of the Embassy in London, proposed in the Senate a motion reserving to the Government of the day all initiative in public expenditure. His proposal was treated with disdain by all politicians outside the dwindling group of the Left Centre. The Radical *Justice* said that if members of Parliament were deprived of their right to propose augmentations of public expenditure, "one might as well vote the budget for five or for seven years in advance; for to give the right exclusively to Ministers would be the revival of absolute power, the resuscitation of the old régime." — August 28, 1893.

principle that the constitutional duty of a legislative Chamber is not to augment but to decrease expenditure. It is not only economists brought up in the English school who have recognised the danger of the system in vogue. In 1881 French budgets, though only ten years had passed since the levy of the crushing war indemnity, were models of economy compared with the swollen estimates of to-day, unprecedented in Europe in time of peace. Gambetta then, with singular foresight, anticipated the abuses which have expanded since his death, and in his project of Revision proposed that to the Chamber of Deputies should be conceded the last word in parliamentary controversies on finance in consideration of its renouncing its power either to increase any estimate in the budget presented by the Minister or to open any new credit.[1] That privilege will last as long as the parliamentary system, of which, however, it may hasten the term; for, failing war or other extra-parliamentary cause of revolution, the nation, with all its wealth, industry, and thrift, must one day seek relief from the ever-swelling burden laid on an unexpanding population.

IV

After the general and detailed discussions of the budget, the interpellations addressed to the Government form the subject of the most conspicuous debates of the

[1] *Le Ministère Gambetta*, par J. Reinach, liv. iv. c. 1. The secretary of Gambetta reveals that this proposition in his original scheme of revision was rejected by his own colleagues in his short-lived ministry, a fact which is not surprising judged by the subsequent parliamentary history of certain members of the Grand Ministère.

ber. The practice of interpellating the Ministers is a growth of the Republic. It was scarcely known in the parliaments of the Restoration or of the July Monarchy; and under the Second Empire, as it is founded on the theory of ministerial responsibility, the right was conceded to deputies only when that régime tried to assume a constitutional mask in its last days.[1] The effect of an interpellation is somewhat similar to that of a motion to adjourn the House in the English Parliament. The right of permitting or of vetoing an interpellation is left to the discretion of the Chamber; but as a Government has rarely a majority on which it can absolutely rely, the House is not often in a disposition to deny itself its favourite diversion of seeing a Minister baited.

In the days when M. Clemenceau was the chief wrecker of ministries the debates roused by interpellations were often disorderly, and the destructive practice, organised with science, made chronic in the parliamentary system the malady of ministerial instability. But though the periodical scenes of uproar, amid which successive Cabinets fell, were undignified, they were provoked by questions and controversies pertaining to legitimate politics. The method of discussing them was unbecoming; the result of the debates was unsatisfactory; but they did little more harm than that of proving to the

[1] M. Jules Simon, shortly before his death, wrote an article defending the practice of the Republican Opposition under the Empire of interpellating the Government on every occasion after the right had been conceded; but he condemned with equal vigour the same practice under the Republic. "Under the Empire," he said, "the Executive was all powerful, and it was necessary to resist it; under the Republic it is languishing, and it ought at any price to be fortified."

world a never controverted fact, that the French are not a parliamentary people.

Of late years a new use has been found for the interpellation. It has been treated by deputies as an instrument of accusation against their colleagues. The Chamber has been turned into an irresponsible tribunal in which the interpellating member assumes the airs of a public prosecutor to disguise his true function of delator. From the aspect of the Chamber at such a moment may be learned why the Republic lacks prestige, and why, notwithstanding, it is fated to last. Moreover, in illustrating once more the incapacity of the French to use parliamentary institutions, it shows, to those who know France, how little the elect of universal suffrage represent the better qualities of the nation.

The subject of the stormy debate which we will follow is unhappily not novel — the right of a Minister or legislator to accept pecuniary advantages from the promoter of a commercial enterprise, the existence of which depends on the favour of Parliament. The tone of the discussion is painful to any lover of representative institutions or of France. In a great commercial community, where the industrial class is as upright as it is intelligent, and where experts on financial subjects are so esteemed that the special term "economist" connoting their craft has been classical for over a century,[1] it might be thought that calm voices of authority would be raised in the popular Chamber to elucidate such a point of ethics.

[1] The word *économiste* in its technical signification is used by Voltaire in 1773: "Si M. Necker blâme les économistes d'avoir dit du mal de Colbert il me paraît qu'il a raison" (*Lett. de la Harpe*), and there are earlier instances of its use in the eighteenth century.

But, as we have seen, the representation of the people is not confided to such as them. It might be expected that opponents of the Republic would in sober accents deplore the recurrence of scandals, bringing discredit on France, which have been more conspicuous under the present régime than under the preceding monarchies. But from the monarchical benches nothing arises but incoherent cries of applause or abuse; and the domestic brawl between Republicans will not be interfered with.

The matter is brought forward by a leader of the Socialists, a fluent master of words, whose oratory, of the style of the pretentious denunciations of the Convention, has sufficient force to call forth thunders of applause from almost every bench when he inveighs against political corruption, though he declares it to be the result of the social system of which he and his applauders are typical representatives. His scathing declamation brings to the tribune one of the accused deputies. It is not the first time that he has been at bay with the Chamber on a similar charge, and it is not for a stranger to judge of his culpability. His bold attitude before a hostile auditory compels a certain sympathy. One of his interrupters, member for a constituency adjacent to his city of origin, flings at him the pregnant insult, "You had not a sou when you first took to politics," affording him the occasion for a rhetorical retort, not unplausible, to the effect that had he applied to his own business the time and energy he had given to public affairs he would be in a happier position of fortune than at present.

Yet it is by no means certain that the peculiar adroitness leading to political reward under the Third Republic is of the nature to induce solid commercial prosperity.

Moreover, apart from sordid suggestions of profit-making from office, when it is remembered that this man, during a term of years as successive governments fell, had the satisfaction of knowing that he was the Minister who could not be spared without a disturbance in the markets of France which waited on his words, it is not unreasonable to suppose that this grasp of power, this wide celebrity for a season, more than made up for the remuneration possibly gained in years obscurely passed in a provincial counting-house. The debate is concluded by the Prime Minister of the moment, a man of refined features, who wearily gives an official assurance that no governmental pressure has been put on the magistrates investigating the case, while he seems to glance across to the diplomatic gallery. The German ambassador, who impassively sits there, will not have to inform his Imperial master to-night that the portfolios of War and of Foreign Affairs are again changing hands. The ministry has been in office barely two months, and, its hour of dissolution not having arrived, "the Chamber, confident in the assurances of the Government, passes to the order of the day." The sole result of the sitting has been to expose another scandal to Europe without the least light having been thrown on the falsity or the truth of the accusations made at the tribune.

V

No matter what the character of the debate, a sitting of the French Chamber always presents one agreeable feature which is wanting in the House of Commons.

Whatever the question at issue, scandalous or serious, domestic or exterior, a sitting is never unduly prolonged. With rare exceptions it is begun and ended between the digestion of the mid-day repast and dinner-time. However grave the crisis depending on the debate, in the words of the official authority on parliamentary procedure, "When the usual hour of adjournment has arrived, or the Chamber seems visibly fatigued, the President consults the House on the day, the hour, and the object of the next sitting."[1] The House of Commons has borrowed the closure from France, because its members required an artificial check on their obstructive loquacity; but it existed in the French Chambers not because legislators needed a bridle on their tongues, but because they liked a methodical manner of closing the sittings at a wholesome hour.[2] Individual orators are verbose; but they are few, and their malady is considered so innocuous that the regulations actually permit the President to suspend the sitting for an interval at the request of an orator whose voice is tired with an already long speech, in order that he may renew his forces to complete his projected harangue. Moreover, not only is the reading of speeches permitted, but a member may read from the tribune the discourse of an absent colleague, provided he approves its sentiments.[3]

The fact that the President directs and determines the

[1] Pierre, *Droit Politique et Parlementaire*, 795.

[2] Night sittings are very rare in the Chamber. If there are arrears of work to be cleared off, it sits in the morning from nine to twelve, instead of prolonging the afternoon sitting into the night. The French have a great objection to transacting business at night, but, on the other hand, they make much better use of the morning hours than we do.

[3] Pierre, *Droit Politique et Parlementaire*, 890.

proceedings of the Chamber in a manner unknown in parliaments where a Minister is the leader of the House, may partly account for the expeditious brevity of sittings, for the prolonging of which no political reasons exist. On this point, as on others, the regulations of the Chamber seem to have been framed in anticipation of ministerial instability and absence of party system. The Prime Minister of the minute is in no sense leader of the Chamber, and still less is there a leader of the Opposition, or an Opposition front bench. Consequently it is the President of the Chamber who has to arrange the order of the day, consulting the Prime Minister, but only as he consults the presidents of commissions, and even the presidents of groups.

Excessive talking is so far from being the weakness of French members of Parliament that in order that a question may be thoroughly discussed, experts are summoned from outside to explain to the House its technical points. The intervention of strangers in a debate seems less anomalous in a legislature where Ministers, some of whom are members of neither House, sit in both Chambers. The practice of designating Commissioners to aid the Government in submitting measures to Parliament dates from the Restoration. It is justified for reasons which are curious from the English point of view. It is said to be inevitable where the Executive of a nation takes part in the legislature; because if it be the duty of a Minister to present laws to Parliament, to expound and to defend them, he must necessarily have coadjutors to aid him in this heavy task, which otherwise would hinder his attending to the administration of his department.

Each Commissioner of the Government is by decree of

the President of the Republic appointed specially for the debate in which his assistance is required; sometimes for the discussion of sections of the budget, sometimes for the explanation of a measure of technical character. The Commissioner takes his place at the tribune as though he were a member of the House, and usually his speech belongs to that species of oratory, excelled in by the French, which they call a "conférence," a word not suggesting the arid dogmatism which we associate with the word "lecture," but a lucid exposition adorned with happy illustration, and moulded in conversational form. Thus the Governor-General of Algeria analyses before the Chamber the budget of that dependency, in a discourse on its resources and progress which would delight the Royal Geographical Society; or a scientific soldier explains the mechanism of a new weapon of destruction in a manner to charm the United Service Institution.[1] Even if members of the House of Commons were ever desirous of hearing within its walls the sound of voices not their own, constitutional usage and tradition would raise difficulties in the way of introducing an exoteric orator in the sacred precinct[2] as grave as those experi-

[1] Occasionally the Commissioner of the Government is carried away by the ardent atmosphere of the Chamber, and forgetting his official impartiality rallies individual deputies as though he were a colleague. Thus Colonel Laroque, who was appointed to explain to the Chamber the mechanism of certain quick-firing guns, was called to order by the President for observing that in his opinion he had done more for the artillery than all the speeches of an eminent deputy who had taken up the subject (Ch. des Députés, 28 Janvier, 1893).

[2] There is of course no analogy between this practice and the right which the House of Commons sometimes exercises to summon strangers to speak at the Bar, which, moreover, is outside the precinct of the Chamber.

enced by Dean Stanley when he wished to put a dissenter in the pulpit of Westminster Abbey. Otherwise it might be of advantage to dispense with the spectacle of an ill-informed Minister striding down the floor of the House to be prompted by the permanent head of his department, who, a dignified civil servant, sits huddled under the gallery with a mass of provincial sightseers. It might, however, detract from the prestige of the Mother of Parliaments if strangers on returning to their native lands were to record that the most pleasing and the most business-like speeches which they had heard in the House of Commons were delivered not by members of that venerable body, but by the Chief Constructor of the Navy or the Secretary of the Local Government Board.

If the system of debating by proxy presents certain advantages, none can be imputed to that of voting by proxy. In the House of Commons the method of taking divisions renders it materially impossible for absent members to vote, except by the usage of pairing. This system is incomprehensible to the French. Their text-book on parliamentary procedure says of it, "In our country of logic and good sense we cannot grasp the idea of giving votes in advance"[1] — a dictum which unconsciously explains their inability to adopt the party system. Nevertheless, in the French Chamber votes are bestowed in advance in a more wholesale manner than in the House of Commons. In principle, members present at a sitting have alone the right to take part in divisions; but in spite of the strong protests of certain Presidents, the practice of deputies voting for their absent colleagues

[1] Pierre, *Droit Politique et Parlementaire*, 1023.

is established and is too convenient to be in danger of abrogation. Each deputy is furnished with voting tickets, white and blue, on which his name is printed; and when the attendants of the Chamber hand to him the urn as he sits in his place, he puts in it a white ticket to signify "Aye" and a blue to signify "No." But when the numbers are proclaimed by the President, they are often palpably in excess of the handful of deputies present; the explanation being that many of these have their desks (of which each deputy has one in front of his allotted place) full of the tickets of absent colleagues to dispose of at their discretion. The abuse could not be carried to an extreme without the connivance of the President and his bureau, as the regulations distinctly say that no division can take place unless a quorum, that is to say an absolute majority of the entire House, be present; but in practice it sometimes happens that as many as 500 members are credited with having voted on a measure of importance when not fifty were in attendance.[1] It is, however, competent for forty deputies present in the Chamber to sign a requisition that a division may be taken by public vote at the tribune, and in that case a member can vote only after answering to his name. The elaborateness of the process prevents it from being put into frequent practice, but it is sometimes made use of by the members of a group, who, remarking that their opponents on a matter under discussion are not present in strength, use it to snatch a victory.

[1] The *Journal des Débats* of June 11, 1893, described the division of the previous day on an Employers' Liability Bill, in which votes of 516 members were recorded, while there were barely fifty present, and called attention to it as an abuse of frequent occurrence.

If members are not assiduous in their attendance they are tenacious of their seats, and resignations are extremely rare, though the only formality required is the despatch of a letter to the President, who, having communicated it to the Chamber, intimates to the Ministry of the Interior that the seat is vacant. Tenacious also are deputies of their privileges, though they have a tendency to use that word in a sense unknown in the land of the birth of parliamentary privilege. That the Minister of Justice should, before the prosecution on a criminal charge of a member of either Chamber, have to ask the House to withdraw from him his parliamentary immunity,[1] is an adaptation of a constitutional form of respectable tradition from another land where privilege of Parliament has had a real significance in the national history. But many members conceive that a deputy is a privileged citizen outside the precinct of Parliament in all relations of civic life.

This conception reflects the spirit pervading the French legislature, which is born of the confused political history of France for a hundred years. There never has been and there never will be a State in which the separation of the powers is clearly defined according to the rigid lines of theorists. In the best ordered constitution there must always be overlappings of jurisdictions and oversteppings

[1] The Chamber seems to be unduly sensitive on this subject, considering how dependent the Executive and the Judicial powers are on the Legislature. In 1892, during the Panama affair, a Government was upset and a Public Prosecutor made to retire because the Chamber insisted on having submitted to it the indictments not only of deputies but of other persons accused of malpractices in connection with that affair. The incident was an example of the confusion of the Legislative and Judicial powers under the Third Republic, and also showed that privilege of Parliament had little similitude to what we understand by that expression.

of boundaries. The most effective assurance against confusion of the powers or acute conflict between them is a strong Executive or a long tradition. The latter is beyond the reach of a parliamentary Government in France; the former, if restored, would probably reconstruct beyond recognition French parliamentary institutions.[1] But while neither of those restraining forces exists, the wonder is that the usurpation of functions beyond its province by the legislative power is not even more aggressive.

Here is a Parliament, not the gradual construction of ages but a new fabric run up swiftly and fortuitously, which has to seek its precedents and procedure in régimes swept away, which with no tradition of its own is constantly bidden to find its models in the Revolution. It is not strange that its members, to whom the Judges of the land look for promotion, should conceive that they form a high judicial tribunal like their forerunners of the Convention. Here is a democratic legislature existing side by side with a centralised administrative Government, organised for manipulation by one strong hand. It is not surprising that a deputy, often finding himself of greater importance than a passing Minister, should deem it his proper function to govern, to administer, to direct by the agency of the bureaucracy which he

[1] M. Jules Ferry, during the debates on the Revision of the Constitution in 1884, expressed that opinion. After pointing out that the Constitution of the United States, which had been quoted as the most favourable for effective separation of the powers, could not with its Federal system provide any example for France to follow, he said: "Dans un pays centralisé comme l'est le nôtre, dans un pays unitaire où l'administration est aussi forte, cette indépendance de l'exécutif vis-à-vis du législatif conduirait vite à la domination de l'exécutif sur le législatif."

nominates. Here are Ministers who, endowed for a moment with vast powers, unknown in constitutional countries, are after a fleeting touch of them dismissed by the caprice of deputies whose parliamentary practice authorises them to regulate and investigate the departments of the State. The inevitable result is confusion between the legislative and the executive powers so inextricable that the constitutional revision to remedy it could scarcely be initiated without a revolution.

CHAPTER V

MINISTERS, MINISTRIES, AND THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

I

A STRANGER arriving one Sunday by train at a French provincial city observes an air of unwonted animation in the station. Outside in the courtyard, usually occupied by the omnibuses sent from the hôtels for the commercial travellers, their chief patrons, is drawn up a squadron of cavalry, while the straight avenue leading to the town is lined as far as the eye can reach with the red and blue of the infantry. The scene is as pleasing as it is unexpected; the word of command in the morning air, the sound of bugle and of trumpet, the flash of steel and glow of uniform in the sunlight send a thrill through the spectator who recognises the cuirassiers of the deadly charge at Reichshofen, and the colours of the foot-soldiers which had been carried to victory at the Alma and Solferino before the fatal day of Sedan. What patriotic festival has he lighted on, the wayfarer wonders, as the troops present arms to the strain of the Marseillaise, which the coldest critic of 1792 cannot hear without emotion in the presence of French soldiers. But his thoughts of Valmy and Jemmapes are disturbed,

for as the band crashes out "Aux armes, citoyens!" a group comes forth from the station. It would seem to have nothing to do with this martial display, but for the attention manifestly paid to it, the central figure being a person of inoffensive mien, as palpably a civilian as the others around him, all clothed in that attire which in England is called evening dress, and in France, being worn at interments, weddings, and other solemn functions, is a costume of ceremony by daylight. As the personage drives away saluted by horse, foot, and artillery, the perplexed stranger is informed that it is the Minister of Agriculture come to unveil the bust of a deceased Republican deputy.

Not the garrison alone is called on to honour this member of the Government, who, a doctor by profession, was a month ago as innocent of agriculture as of arms. From the palace by the cathedral comes forth the Cardinal-Archbishop with his Vicar-General, his carriage blocking the way to the prefecture of the procession of the Judges, who, like his Eminence, are hastening, robed, to present their respects to the Minister. When some months hence he has retired from the splendours of the ministerial residence to his modest home, he will recall two fine sensations of his official existence: the one when, arriving in a town, the order rang out to the troops to present arms to him, a man of peace; the other at the prefecture, when a prince of the Church, with conciliating words, bowed before him, an anti-clerical free-thinker. The contrasts which a Minister of the Republic thus experiences recall the adventure of Christopher Sly, with whom he must be disposed to exclaim, "I have had the bravest dream that ever thou heard'st

in all thy life." If he be acquainted with the usages of the country of that hero, he will know that the most powerful Minister that England ever had, visiting a provincial city on a political mission, would have to walk from the station if the local members of his party did not provide a carriage; while to greet the Minister of War himself not a single volunteer or militiaman would don his uniform.

These signal honours paid sometimes on a single day to five or six Ministers on various points of the territory are not exacted by the pride of place of the recipients, nor indeed are they a growth of the Third Republic. The homage seemingly paid by army, clergy, and magistracy to the casual holder of a ministerial portfolio is in reality a tribute to the memory of the founder of modern France. In 1804 the statute-books underwent a slight transformation. The binding, the type, and the paper remained the same, and the revolutionary dating was unchanged; but volume twenty-one, published in "Floréal An XII." comes from the "Imprimerie de la République," while number twenty-two, issued in "Brumaire," bears the stamp of the "Imprimerie Impériale." The First Consul had become Emperor of the French by the grace of God and the constitutions of the Republic, and one of his first acts, given at the Palace of St. Cloud, was the celebrated Decree of Messidor,[1] to regu-

[1] Décret Impérial du 24 Messidor, An XII. The Revolutionary Calendar, which came into use in September, 1793 (Vendémiaire, An II.), was not discontinued until the end of 1805, when Napoleon had been Emperor nearly two years, the Treaty of Presbourg, dated 5 Nivôse, An XIV. (and for the benefit of the Emperor of Austria, December 26, 1805), being about the last official document on which it was used. Vendémiaire, September 22 to October 21, was the first month of the year, Brumaire, Frimaire,

late public ceremonies, precedence and honours, civil and military, which still determines the state functions of the Third Republic. Certain clauses prescribing the honours due to objects of reverence have fallen into disuse. The Blessed Sacrament, named first in the decree, is now not publicly recognised save when a municipal council prosecutes a priest for bearing it in procession through the streets. His Imperial Majesty, the Princes and grand dignitaries of his house, who are next mentioned, no longer require military salutes. But the Ministers, next on the list, flourish in greater abundance than at any period in the history of France, and it is as members of the constituted body founded by the great Emperor that they claim their fifteen guns and their escort of cavalry.

Question one of these Republican politicians as to the significance of the military pomp which acclaims a simple citizen in broadcloth, and he may tell you that it is because he incarnates the sovereignty of the people. Possibly he believes the theory; but whether he holds this doctrinaire fancy, or more humanly dreams for a moment that some of the homage is meant for a statesman of genius on his upward career, he is mistaken. The honours accorded to Ministers are a significant relic of the epoch when they were members of the great military household which superintended the reconstruction of France. If we examine this Decree of Messidor and the others in the volume, we find them countersigned with modest names soon to disappear from the statute-book when Maret, Secretary of State, and Regnier,

Nivôse, Pluviôse, Ventôse, Germinal, Floréal, Prairial, Messidor, Thermidor, and Fructidor following in the order named.

Minister of Justice, became dukes, taking their titles of Bassano and Massa from vanquished Italy, just like Marshals Oudinot and Masséna, to whom the conqueror gave the duchies of Reggio and of Rivoli. Napoleon did not adorn these peaceful functionaries with titles of the sound and origin of those conferred on his warriors to prove that to sit on an office-stool was as glorious an achievement as to fight a battle. His system had precisely the opposite aim and effect. He said to his civilian servitors, Do my work well and you shall have the supreme reward within the reach of human beings; you shall be recompensed with the honours otherwise reserved for victorious soldiers. And thus it is because the one tangible result of the Revolution was the reconstruction of France by a soldier that the drums are beat and the cannon fired when a Minister of the Third Republic visits a country town.

II

Although it is important to notice that a Minister on his travels appears to the populace as the symbol of the Napoleonic settlement of the Revolution, his other attributes differ considerably from those conferred on his predecessors under the Empire. Napoleon's Ministers were simply his clerks, with less discretion left to them than to his military lieutenants. A Minister of the Third Republic, on the contrary, while he remains in office is invested with absolute and wide-spread powers. The centralised authority organised by Napoleon is divided in the hands of several Ministers whose admin-

istration may be regarded as dictatorship in commission — though that term does not fully express the plenitude of a French Minister's powers if it implies that he is in their exercise answerable to his colleagues. He is supposed to be responsible to Parliament, but as the parliamentary machine is not adapted for supervising a bureaucracy, ministerial responsibility takes the form of ministerial instability. If the Ministers of France habitually held office undisturbed for several years, the most vigilant Parliament would with difficulty control their extensive powers, and so the failure of the parliamentary system has by hazard provided a remedy against ministerial irresponsibility. But for this it would have been better to examine their functions, in conjunction with the attributes of the Chief of the State, as nominally the President of the Republic and the Ministers together form the Executive. But we have already seen that in the most centralised departments of the Government the power is exercised less by its titular head than by deputies or senators, who have acquired an irregular authority in controlling the bureaucratic machine outside their corporate capacity as members of Parliament.

Since 1879 all the Ministers of the Republic have been Republicans, chiefly of the Opportunist and Radical groups, and from that date to the formation of the Méline Cabinet in 1896, 130 different persons filled the various ministerial posts. As in that interval twenty-five Cabinets were formed, each of about eleven members, it is clear that the same persons have often held office more than once. Indeed, there was only one of these Cabinets which did not contain one or more members of the Ministry immediately preceding it, and in it were

seven Ministers who had held portfolios in recent Governments.

Thus the resignation of a Ministry and the formation of a new one is usually under the Third Republic a mere reconstruction of the council, the defeated Prime Minister himself sometimes accepting a subordinate place in the new combination. But a Minister has been permitted to hold the same post in successive Cabinets only in offices the prolonged tenure of which puts no inordinate power in the hands of the holder. We have seen how M. Jules Ferry remained Minister of Education for a specific purpose during several administrations, and how a Minister of Finance has occasionally been left undisturbed in his office, half its prerogatives being appropriated by the Commission of the Budget. But generally when a Minister thus retains his portfolio, it is because he is unformidable and the office unimportant.[1] A striking exception was the retention by M. de Freycinet of the Department of War through five ministries, from 1888 to 1892; but the War-Office is considered to present no domestic danger while a civilian directs it. Indeed, M. de Freycinet was left there for the purpose of keeping it out of the hands of a soldier until the passage had been forgotten of General Boulanger, whose first popular glory was partly due to the Imperial Decree of Messidor quoted above, which, according special mili-

[1] *E.g.* M. Cochery was perpetual Minister of Posts and Telegraphs (a post since abolished) while eight Cabinets fell from 1879 to 1886. M. de Mahy, the creole deputy for Réunion, being an authority on colonial questions, remained Minister of Agriculture through three ministries. M. Viette was Minister of Public Works in 1892–93 during four successive administrations.

tary honours to the Minister of War, gives an ambitious wearer of an uniform peculiar opportunity of display.

The great offices of central administration are those in which a minister is not allowed to stay long. The Keeper of the Seals has the appointment of eight thousand judges and judicial officers, so a new Minister of Justice is usually appointed with every new Cabinet. But it is the Ministry of the Interior which excites the most watchful jealousy; and only once[1] since M. Grévy's accession has the holder of that office in a fallen Cabinet been effectively kept on to handle the wires which from the Place Beauvau move the administrative Government of France. M. Constans, as the penalty of that privilege, aroused such feelings of disquiet and odium that his three years' tenure of the redoubtable portfolio put an end to his ministerial career. His offence was that he did his work too well. When he was called to the office early in 1889, after General Boulanger's triumphant election as member for Paris, it seemed likely that the Exhibition of the Centenary of the Revolution would be opened by that popular hero, instead of by President Carnot. M. Constans, whose curious past had invested him with a legend of strength and dexterity untroubled by scruple, was called in as the sole strong man capable of upsetting the people's idol, who, five weeks after the entry of the new minister, was in flight. When

[1] There were two other occasions when, a Cabinet being patched up to linger for a few weeks, the Minister of the Interior was not disturbed. In 1883 M. Fallières and in 1892 M. Loubet each retained the portfolio of the Interior in two successive Cabinets, and in each case the second combination did not last for twenty days. Also at the beginning of the Grévy Presidency, M. Waddington retained in his Cabinet M. de Marcère, who had been M. Dufaure's Minister of the Interior in the last Cabinet under Marshal MacMahon. But these exceptions, mentioned for the sake of accuracy, are not important.

the ministry fell, Boulangism being not quite dead, M. Constans retained his portfolio in the new Cabinet, which had an abnormal life of nearly two years. Thus he became the object of malign attack unequalled even under the Third Republic, where the capabilities of an unlicensed press have grown beyond the dreams of anarchy; and the rancour of defeated Boulangism, in rooting up buried fragments of his private life, was encouraged by his political allies, who viewed with envious dismay the machine of centralisation worked without interruption by a bold and vigorous hand.

While care is thus taken to prevent a minister becoming master of a powerful department, the same names recur so frequently in the composition of Cabinets that an epithet, not of complimentary sound, has been invented, "ministrable,"[1] to designate the politicians who are oftenest found in ministerial combinations. The most notable example under the Third Republic was M. de Freycinet. Between 1877 and 1892 he was for nearly eight years a Minister in ten different Cabinets, over four of which he presided, holding the portfolios of War, Public Works, and Foreign Affairs. Usually the "ministrables" most

[1] "Ministrable," a word not found in the latest supplement of Littré's Dictionary, is formed presumably on the analogy of the Italian *papabile*, though its signification in nowise corresponds with the epithet applied to the cardinals who are thought to have a chance of election to the papal chair. Although "ministrable" is used in an uncomplimentary sense, it is not so offensive as our expression "party hack," as it is applied to capable men who frequently obtain office as well as to mediocrities. The *Journal des Débats*, which is a jealous guardian of the French language, though it is a defender of the parliamentary system, defined a "ministrable" as one who having been Minister can, without too much scandal, take a place in a ministerial combination, adding "pour parler de ces choses il faut oublier qu'il y a une langue Française."

frequently in office have been politicians less conspicuous, such as M. Fallières, who, in the course of a decade, was a minister for six years, and M. Tirard, who, in a like period, held office for five years, each of them having been Prime Minister. The period of the Panama scandal introduced a new generation of "ministrables." A number of habitual office-holders were involved in it, and several of their best-known colleagues died about the same time.

The proportion of members of the legislature who attain ministerial rank has some bearing on the working of the parliamentary machine, and a comparison between the French and English systems is interesting. While in the seventeen years after the accession of M. Grévy in 1879, a hundred different senators and deputies were Ministers in the rapidly dissolving Cabinets of France (about thirty posts having been given to persons not in Parliament), in England during the same period sixty-five different members of the two Houses sat in our more durable Cabinets. But we cannot confine the comparison to Cabinet Ministers, for this reason. In France (since Under-Secretaries after a fitful trial were practically abolished as being useless under a constitution which allows a Minister to sit in both chambers), the Government of the day has consisted of the Cabinet Ministers at the heads of the great departments, and of no one else. In England, on the other hand, a Government consists of over forty[1] members of the two chambers, of whom sixteen on the average form the Cabinet, thirty of the ministerial places being usually distributed in the House

[1] Not counting the household appointments, as they have no counterpart in a Republic, though some of our nominal courtiers are active politicians who represent in Parliament administrative departments.

of Commons. Thus while in France 100 different senators and deputies have held portfolios, 250 different members of the British Parliament have enjoyed office. Moreover, the average annual ministerial salaries touched by French legislators have been £20,000,[1] while the pay of Ministers in England has amounted to more than £160,000 a year.

In France there are eleven Ministers, all told, who hold the portfolios of War, Marine, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Justice, Education, Finance, Commerce, Public Works, Agriculture, and Colonies,[2] of whom the first two are usually not members of Parliament, the Foreign Minister being sometimes in the same case. Thus we may reckon that nine ministerial places are on the average distributed among all the senators and deputies. Two of them are generally allotted to the Senate, so that seven appointments are within the reach of 580 deputies, instead of thirty which usually fall to the share of 670 members of the House of Commons.

[1] When this was written, a French Cabinet of average composition was in office, in which there were seven deputies and two senators, their united salaries at 60,000 francs being 540,000 francs minus 63,000 francs reimbursed by the seven deputies, who, while they are in office, forfeit their deputy's salary of 9000 francs, senators by a curious anomaly being allowed to cumulate. This makes a total of 477,000 francs — £19,080. But as in England the Lord Chancellor is a Minister, the salary of the President of the Senate ought, perhaps, to be added for the purpose of the comparison, though he is never a Minister, it being 72,000 francs = £2880. It is difficult to compare satisfactorily the two systems, as all the conditions and features are dissimilar. For example, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is sometimes a Minister with a seat in the Cabinet, and the salary attached to his exceptional post alone amounts to more than all the combined salaries of Ministers who are members of the two French Houses.

[2] The portfolio of Public Worship is held either by the Minister of Justice, of Education, or of the Interior; that of Fine Arts is almost always attached to that of Education.

It is the Lower Chamber in both countries which generally has the power of reversing ministries, and we must try to picture the House of Commons under conditions similar to those which prevail in the Chamber of Deputies. We will imagine not that practices were introduced foreign to the British Constitution, such as the faculty given to Ministers of sitting in both Houses, or their appointment outside Parliament,[1] but merely that ministerial posts were reduced to strict limits of utility, and that the sole holders of places of profit in the House of Commons were seven Ministers, and four or five Under-Secretaries to represent departments presided over by peers. Such a reform, by undermining party discipline, would probably reduce the British House of Commons to a state of anarchy not far removed from that of the French Chamber.

The House of Commons has of late years shown symptoms of the evils formerly held to characterise Continental imitations of the British parliament, a spirit of disorder and a tendency to break up into groups. The one is to some extent the corollary of the other, and the former evil is kept in check by the party system not less than the latter; as when the unseemly conduct of individuals brings discredit on a numerous body to which they owe allegiance, stronger influences can be exerted to restrain it than if it reflected on the character merely of a small group. Now in the presence of those symptoms, it may be doubted if party loyalty would stand the strain of the extinction of two-thirds of its rewards. If on the meet-

[1] The occasional inability of an Irish Law Officer to find a seat in the House of Commons does not affect the general strictness of our usual constitutional practice.

ing of a new Parliament the places bestowed on members of the House of Commons were limited to ten or a dozen, it is scarcely probable that their recipients would be allowed to occupy them undisturbed for five or six years. The best disciplined party would reveal unsuspected material for revolt or schism. It might be thought that in a party of 400 members it would not matter to the rank and file whether 390 of them were uncalled to office or 370. But a lottery offering thirty prizes to 400 ticket-holders is three times as popular as one which gives but ten, and, save a few of the greatest, the places distributed to his followers by an English Prime Minister partake of the nature of prizes in a lottery.

The conclusion to be drawn from this comparison is not that we should put an end to our Junior Lords, and Financial Secretaries and Law Officers, as it is possible that the cost of their superfluous places is an insurance against government by group and parliamentary anarchy. Nor is it that the French Republic should invent a number of useless ministerial posts in the hope that enlarged ministries would be durable, for during the existence of Under-Secretaryships the average life of a Cabinet was not an hour longer than after their practical abolition.[1] It is, moreover, to the credit of the Republic, not usually

[1] After the establishment of the Constitution of 1875, the appointment of Under-Secretaries was very irregular, some Cabinets being entirely without them, and some attaching them to the majority of the Ministers, but down to their practical abolition in 1886 there was never a Cabinet with its full complement of Under-Secretaries. From 1886 to 1893 one single Under-Secretary was attached first to the Ministry of Marine, and afterwards to that of Commerce, for the direction of the Colonies, until a separate colonial department was established in 1894. Again in 1896 an Under-Secretary of Posts and Telegraphs was attached to the Ministry of Commerce.

severe in the repression of useless places of profit, that they were abolished, as their retention might have been pleaded for on the ground of their having introduced to official life some of the most respectable office-holders of the Republic, all its Presidents who had ever held a ministerial portfolio having each commenced his career as Under-Secretary.[1] The conclusion to be drawn is that the parliamentary system is a complicated construction, the growth of ages, its stability dependent on a combination of conditions which cannot be created at will—traditions, sentiments, anachronisms, anomalies. The more deeply we examine French efforts to maintain it, the more clearly it appears to be for ever doomed to fail. The party system, we have seen, is one essential for its good working. But the party system requires party discipline, and even if the French succeeded in imitating its organisation for a season, they have none of the materials for its discipline, which in England we, predisposed to respect authority, have to seek in precedents and practices, and even in abuses, handed down from the past; while the French, who, outside official circles, have not that predisposition, have to improvise or to borrow their details of parliamentary machinery.

Thus we see that under the Republic, whether ministries provide many or few places for office-seekers, their instability is unaffected. But the result would be the same under whatever conditions the parliamentary system was essayed in France. There are French admirers of representative institutions who firmly believe that their

[1] M. Casimir-Périer in the Dufaure Cabinet of 1877, M. Carnot in the Waddington and Freycinet Cabinets of 1879, and M. Félix Faure in the Grand Ministère of 1881.

Government could thrive under them if circumstances were changed. They say it is the fault of the Republic; or that universal suffrage is responsible for the character of the Ministers successively hurried from office. But France has tried the parliamentary system when the Government was not a Republic, when the franchise was limited, when deputies were not salaried, and when ministers were statesmen illustrious throughout Europe—and the lifetime of Ministries was of the same average duration as under the present régime.

After the Revolution of July, Louis Philippe's first Ministry contained a list of names, the lustre of which is unsurpassed in any British Cabinet of the century. M. Guizot was at the Interior; M. Molé (with Talleyrand Ambassador in London) at the Foreign Office; at the Ministry of Education was Duc Victor de Broglie; while MM. Casimir-Périer, Laffitte, the financier, and Dupin were Ministers without portfolios. It is not surprising that the King could not decide which of them to call to preside over the others, or indeed that so talented a combination should have dissolved in three months. M. Laffitte then became the first Prime Minister of the Monarchy of July, and his Government lasted for five months. Then M. Casimir-Périer formed a Cabinet in May, 1831, and there are few pages of later French history more pathetic than that describing the struggles of the veteran parliamentarian, who illustrated the bourgeoisie of the Revolution, till he was struck down a victim to the cholera. The crisis after his death lasted for months, and then was formed another marvellous combination. Marshal Soult, with the portfolio of War, presided over it, the Duc de Broglie became Foreign Minister, M. Guizot

transferred his talents to Public Instruction, and M. Thiers came upon the scene as Minister of the Interior. That Cabinet had a relatively long life, but it underwent so many reconstructions and changes of Prime Minister that it is not clear when the end came of the famous Ministry of October 11, 1832.

Finally, when the Orleans dynasty quitted France after occupying the throne for seventeen years and a half, it had been aided by the counsels of eighteen ministries;[1] and if the last of them was long-lived it did not display the advantage of longevity, as when it fell it brought down the Monarchy with it. No doubt the same Ministers often returned to office, and the "ministrables" of those days made a better figure in Europe when they were called Guizot and Thiers (each of whom sat in eight Cabinets) than under the Third Republic, when M. Tirard was perhaps the most respectable type of the recurring holders of portfolios. But the ultimate effect was even more disastrous than that of the parliamentary régime which this generation has witnessed; and the Monarchy of July, which has left its name to a period of commercial prosperity, literary brilliancy, and political eloquence, disappeared in a street-brawl unworthy of the name of revolution; a catastrophe inexplicable but for the fact that parliamentarism is repugnant to the genius of the French.

[1] This was the calculation of M. Jules Simon, who as a young man was a witness of the numerous ministerial crises and reconstructions of the first part of the reign. The ministry of October 29, 1840, had, however, an abnormally long life, as in reality M. Guizot was Prime Minister from its formation to the Revolution of February, 1848. Nominally he only became President of the Council in September, 1847, Marshal Soult having been till then titular Prime Minister. The ministerial instability under the Restoration is mentioned on p. 344.

So we see that under Monarchy or Republic, with a narrow or a wide suffrage, with deputies unpaid or paid, with Ministers illustrious or obscure, the parliamentary system in France has had one consistent result, — ministerial instability with its corollary governmental anarchy.

III

In the fifty years which elapsed after Lord John Russell formed his Government in 1846 only eight men filled the office of Prime Minister of England, while eight different men filled the same office in France in the last seven years of that half century. All that this statement proves is that England has been governed under a régime which suits the national temperament, and that that is not the case of France. Moreover, mere length of days in a ministry does not necessarily bring to a nation domestic felicity, honour, and abundance; or the Victorian age would pale before the period when the Regency mellowed into the reign of George IV., under Lord Liverpool's Premiership of fourteen years, the days of the Luddites and of Peterloo, of the trials of Thistlewood and of Queen Caroline. No doubt the converse state of things leads to anarchy; but ministerial stability is not in its essence a public benefit, for clearly the long continuance of a bad Minister at the direction of affairs is an evil. It is of advantage in popular Governments, because it is a sign that the régime is pleasing to the people and that its officers have inspired them with confidence.

There is another species of ministerial stability also cited with admiration in France. When Prince Lobanoff

in 1895 became Minister for Foreign Affairs in Russia, it was recorded with envy that since 1813 there had been only three occupants of that high office, — MM. de Nesselrode, Gortchakof, and De Giers; while France had employed more than enough titularies of the post to supply a new one every other year. M. de Nesselrode's term was so long that to compete with it in France it would be necessary to establish not only ministerial stability, but stability of régime, as it had begun before he came to Paris to negotiate the downfall of the First Empire, and did not end till after the Crimean war; lasting through First Restoration, Hundred Days, Second Restoration, Monarchy of July, Second Republic, to Second Empire. The span of human life, apart from political vicissitude, does not often permit of such experience; but to institute terms of service even as long as those of Prince Gortchakof or of M. de Giers, who together served for the third of a century, France has only to adopt the Russian method of government, or to resume her own form of autocracy, which M. de Nesselrode and his master, Alexander I., took such pains to upset in 1814. The homage paid by France to Russia in the last decade of the nineteenth century has been one of the most curious international spectacles ever presented to Europe, regarded either as the attitude of one great power before another, or as that of a democracy before a despotism. As one deeply attached to France, while watching the phases of the Franco-Russian alliance, and studying French institutions, I have sometimes been moved to regret that France should not go to Russia for her models of government, and to England for her friendships, which in any case would not do her the harm

she has suffered in her efforts to adopt the British parliamentary system.

If nations were subject to the same unjust resentments as human beings, France might well dislike England for the very reason of having imported an institution modelled on one of hers, and of having found it a failure. It is as though a man, whose affairs had been managed with irregularity, should behold, with envious admiration, a neighbour in the possession of a machine which, patiently constructed and steadily driven, performed fairly well its appointed task, sometimes being improved as new needs arose. He suddenly decides in a moment of crisis to have one manufactured on the same pattern, reckless of the fact that neither the material he has to produce nor the overseers and labourers who will have to work the machine bear any resemblance to those of his neighbour. But he has one swiftly put together by unpractical theorists, with the aid of books, and it starts. It is constantly exploding; it is regarded by the inhabitants sometimes with terror, sometimes with scorn; it periodically kills a manager, and gangs of foremen are at short intervals discharged maimed, while the workmen are perpetually fighting and disfiguring one another in quarrels as to the way of handling it; but it rattles on, sometimes under one class of management, sometimes under another quite different, and never doing a good day's work in any case. Once it was stopped for a season, and no one was any the worse for the cessation; but because the manager who shut it up came to a bad end after partially reviving it, it was brought out again after his dismissal, and patched up to look like a new machine. It has blundered on, with fewer fatal accidents

it is true, but with much more din and odour than it ever made, first-class artisans being rarely employed on it in these days.

It is the fault of M. de Montesquieu. Had he never met Lord Chesterfield at Venice, our polite ambassador to Holland would not have sought him out at the Hague in 1729, and conveyed him in his yacht to England, where his sojourn of two years has had more effect on the history of France since the Revolution than perhaps any other single event in the eighteenth century. The *Esprit des Lois* would have added its legions of Romans and Greeks to the forces of antiquity, which carried on the French people to upset their monarchy; but, had Montesquieu not gone to England, there would have been in his immortal work, which, in spite of its fantastic extravagances,[1] turned the course of human thought, no eulogies of the British Constitution among his disquieting praises of the republics of old. So the French Republic having turned into Empire after about as many weeks[2] of duration as the years of the life of the Roman Republic, before it gave birth to the Cæsars, the doctrinaires of the Revolution, when they scented the coming downfall of Napoleon, passed by the chapters of the *Esprit des Lois* on the virtues of republics, and pondered those extolling the beauties of the English Constitution.

[1] Voltaire's *Commentaire sur l'Esprit des Lois*, for any one familiar with Montesquieu, provides half an hour's most facetious reading.

[2] The Republic, on the proclamation of the Empire, May 8, 1804, had lasted 11 years and nearly 8 months, or barely 600 weeks; the Roman Republic is calculated to have lasted between 500 and 600 years. But the Republic really ended on November 9, 1799 (18 Brumaire), after little more than seven years of existence, having been proclaimed on September 21, 1792, though its name was officially retained, not only through the Consulate, but in the first years of the Empire.

There was no more talk about Athens and Sparta, now associated with the Jacobin Club, the guillotine, and other institutions unknown in ancient Greece. The English Constitution was on the lips of the new regenerators of France in the last days of the Emperor, who disliked England and neglected Montesquieu.[1]

In 1792 Marie Antoinette, recalling how the King had scouted the idea of his functions being reduced to those of an English monarch, lamented that the British Constitution had not been established in France; but the unhappy Queen regretted many other expedients of a very different order, which might have spared her and hers from the grim abyss, to the verge of which she was already dragged. Mme. de Staël, who related the anecdote,[2] adds, that for the twenty-five troubled years previous to the Restoration it had been the practice for people in France to invoke the British Constitution when they were in distress, and to neglect it when circumstances changed. Yet even at the outset of that period, when the old edifice was overturned in 1790, and when France might have made a new start, could the anarchy have been quelled, the British Constitution, which Necker and other moderate men counselled the Constituent Assembly to establish, was the one fabric which could not have been erected on the ruins of the Ancient Régime, for one among many reasons, that its essential virtue lay in its gradual growth of ages. But the idea of tacking it on,

[1] "Son éducation avait été fort incomplète. Par exemple, il n'avait pas lu Montesquieu comme il faut le lire." — Stendhal, *Mémoires sur Napoléon*. He had, however, read Montesquieu in a fashion in the days of his youth with his compatriot and subsequent enemy, Pozzo di Borgo, who records the fact in his *Notes sur la Corse*.

[2] *Considérations sur la Révolution Française*, 1re partie, c. xx.

in 1814, to the solid new construction fashioned by Napoleon, was to the last degree empirical.

The accomplished daughter of Necker was one of those who preached its introduction into France, and, referring to Napoleon's rivalry with our country, said that "the only way of becoming equal to England is to imitate her." Mme. de Staël's *Considérations sur la Révolution Française*, which only appeared on her death, two years after the second and more stable establishment of Louis XVIII. on the throne of his ancestors, show how all the Liberals, whether they shared her hatred of Napoleon, or had accepted his rule, were impregnated with the idea that the British Constitution contained elements for the regeneration of all governments. In perusing it and similar works of the period, one sees how it came to pass that the Senate, bidden by the Allies to present a charter for Louis XVIII. to accept when he came to Saint-Ouen, in a day or two drew one up according to English principles and precedents, even before Napoleon had started for Elba. Mme. de Staël, long before her first visit to England, had acquired a deep admiration for our institutions from her father, who, in her childhood, had gone to London before his first term of office, and it is due to her bright intelligence to recognise that no one more lucidly than she contrasted the differences in the bases of society in the two countries.

That clearness of view is not perceptible generally in the writings of the constitutional doctrinaires and Liberals, who at this period engaged in the sport of chasing false analogies, which, diverting in the playing-fields of dialectic, is dangerous when applied to the government of human societies. As Charles I. and Louis XVI. were

fated to die by the hands of their subjects, it would have been of benefit to the French people if the English king had fallen at Naseby or been secretly despatched at Carisbrook, like Edward II. at Berkeley; or if Louis had perished at the sack of the Tuileries, or had been massacred the next month, like the Princesse de Lamballe. For, as the two monarchs were both publicly beheaded on scaffolds after mock trials, it was clear to the French Liberals that the English and the French Revolutions were identical phases in the history of two countries. It did not matter that the causes, political, fiscal, and ecclesiastical, were unlike; that the relations of the respective kings with church, nobility, and people, and the mutual relations of the Three Estates were entirely dissimilar; that no single movement in the two civil wars could be compared; that every circumstance leading to and following the two regicides was different — England had decapitated her king, France had decapitated hers, therefore the French Revolution corresponded to the English Revolution, the Bourbons to the Stuarts, and so on.

Hence the reflections of the French Liberals on the sequel to the Great Rebellion were auxiliary to the Restoration of Louis XVIII. by the Allies, and when it was accomplished they had no further doubt that every stage of the English Revolution would have its counterpart in France. Thus half a generation later, the dethronement of the legitimate king in favour of another member of the royal family, not next in succession, was prefigured beforehand in artificial public opinion on the lines of the English Revolution of 1688, aided by circumstances and by the hereditary willingness of Orleans princes to in-

trigue against their anointed relatives. Perhaps if the children of Louis Philippe had all died young, like the infants of Queen Anne, M. Guizot would have unearthed some Electress Sophia, sprung from the Bourbon alliances with the Palatinate, to provide a German dynasty for the throne of France, corresponding with our Hanoverian succession. But his analogy-hunting would have received a check, as the nation was sick to death of parliamentary government, and threw itself into the arms of Louis Bonaparte, to be compared with whom no member of the house of Cromwell had existed.

The comparison of the superficial aspects of the two Revolutions is as well known as it is now discredited; but one has to peruse the literature of the time to realise how far the mania was carried by the school which fain would institute a perfect harmony of the Revolutionary gospels of the two nations. There are pamphlets by M. Guizot which, when one comes across them in old libraries, appear to be at first glance historical sketches of past episodes in English history, so crammed are they with English names and seventeenth century dates, instead of being polemical essays on contemporary French events. Here is one, *Du gouvernement de la France depuis la Restauration et du Ministère Actuel*, published in 1820, wherein recur more frequently the names of Southampton and Clarendon, of Ashley and Arlington than those of MM. Decazes, De Feltre, Royer-Collard, and Camille Jordan, who are, with far-fetched fancy, compared with the statesmen of Charles II. There is another of a year later, *Des Conspirations et de la Justice Politique*,[1]

[1] In this pamphlet the preface consists of a translation of Erskine's panegyric of the British Constitution pronounced at the trial of Hadfield in 1800 for firing at George III.

in which M. Guizot transcribes whole pages from Cobbett's *State Trials;* for France clearly could not enjoy her Restoration without a Rye House Plot and a trial of Algernon Sidney, without a Dr. Titus Oates and a Judge Jeffreys. So also, a dozen years later, when the Legitimists had become Jacobites, we find the Chamber of Deputies solemnly discussing the treatment of the Duchesse de Berry by the light of British precedents in the case of the young Pretender.[1]

It is instructive to study with some detail this curious phase of French history, when on the morrow of Waterloo aspirants to popular favour boldly proclaimed the perfection of British institutions and precedents, because the ministerial instability and other features of governmental anarchy of the present day must be referred to the events of that period. Political France of to-day was made in the generation succeeding the Revolution. The progress of civilisation; the changes in the material conditions of the population; certain reforms fortuitously produced, such as extension of the suffrage in 1848; the disastrous war with Germany, which left a shadow on the spirit of the people: all these factors must be considered in studying the French nation as a whole at the end of the century. But political France of to-day, though its outward form and aspect have been altered by minor revolutions and changes of régime, examined beneath the surface is the creation of the thirty years succeeding the fall of the Bastille in 1789. The period may roughly be divided into three stages. In the first was destroyed the Ancient Régime; in the second Napoleon raised on its ruins the

[1] Procès-verbal des séances de la Chambre des Députés, Novembre, Décembre, 1832.

solid fabric of centralisation demanded by the temperament and essential to the well-being of the French people; in the third the parliamentary system was imported from England and incongruously tacked on to the national edifice.

The British Constitution deserves most of the praise that has been applied to it; but its name implies that it is admirable as a working machine within the realm in which it has slowly developed. As the Church of England says of one of its sacraments, it is not intended to be "carried about or worshipped," and this is how the French doctrinaires treated it. Far different was the attitude of the founders of the American Commonwealth. All of them were familiar with and appreciative of the merits of the British Constitution; many of them were the sons of makers of its parliamentary system; some of them were impregnated with the doctrines of Montesquieu; but the result of their experience and knowledge was that they recognised that no mere adaptation of British institutions would flourish even in an Anglo-Saxon community, and they produced a constitution which is a durable monument of human wisdom. Instead of reading Montesquieu as a mere eulogist of the Constitution of their ancestors, they expounded his treatise rather as a laudatory criticism of the British system, and they took from him, by the light of their own experience, the principle of the separation of the powers more clearly defined than it ever was in England.

Thus in completely separating the executive from the legislature they made impossible the establishment of the parliamentary system, of which an essential feature is the responsibility of Ministers to Parliament. As Mr.

Bryce points out, the results of their clear division of the legislative power from the executive have been farther reaching than they anticipated, for the motive which urged the Americans to keep Ministers out of the legislature was the fear lest it, by the Ministers, should become the servant of the Chief of the Executive, who might assume certain prerogatives of the British sovereign which were greater then than now.[1] We have nothing to do here with the developments of the Constitution of the United States; but if the French doctrinaires had turned their attention to it instead of remaining in indiscriminate ecstasy at the perfection of the English system, the history of government in France during the nineteenth century might possibly have been less chequered.

We must, however, bear in mind the circumstances under which the parliamentary system gained admission to France. The Constitution of 1814 was not like that of the United States, the deliberate work of grave delegates firm in their convictions, discussed at leisure amid profound peace in the calm of the Quaker city — at a time when calm was not yet banished from the American Continent. By senators, owing their position to having dissimulated from the Emperor their Liberalism, it was improvised in five days amid the wild agitation of Paris, then a camp of victorious Cossacks and Prussians, with Napoleon at Fontainebleau not yet dissuaded from striking another blow to renew the bloodshed which had now reached the walls of the capital.

By the most curious of the ironies of political history, the permission to the French to enter into the privilege of parliamentary government was announced to them by the

[1] *American Commonwealth*, part i. c. xxv.

autocrat of Russia. Talleyrand, always in haste to betray a falling master, had lodged the Tsar at his house, whence, on March 31, 1814, was sent to be placarded on the walls of Paris the announcement of the Allied Sovereigns that the Emperor had resumed again his simple style of Napoleon Bonaparte, and that the nation was free to give itself a constitution; the proclamation bearing the sole signature of Alexander with the countersign of his minister, Nesselrode. After another occupation of Paris fifty-seven years later, when a Prince of Prussia, who had first come in 1814 with the Allies, returned as German Emperor, his servant, Prince Bismarck, who had brought him thither, expressed the hope that France might maintain the republican form of government as being more likely to prolong her isolation among the monarchical powers of Europe. One might almost fancy that a similar thought crossed the mind of the sagacious autocrat when he invited the French people to repudiate autocracy, and was the most urgent of the Allies in forcing the Constitution on Louis XVIII.,[1] discerning, perhaps, that a nation which had

[1] Montgaillard, in his *Histoire de France depuis la fin du règne de Louis XVI.* (Paris, 1827), relates that "on the 29th of April, the Emperor Alexander visited Louis XVIII. at Compiègne and strongly insisted on the King, prior to his entry into the capital, promising by proclamation a Liberal Constitution. Afterwards he sent to St. Ouen three couriers to the King, the last with the message that if the promise were not thus made, he should not enter Paris. The proclamation was drawn up (by M. de Talleyrand it was said) and the draft sent to the Emperor Alexander, who corrected two or three passages," etc. Mme. de Staël had written to him on April 28: "Sire, the English Constitution has been from all time regarded by all publicists, from Montesquieu to M. Necker, as the highest point of perfection to which human society could attain." There is no doubt about the Tsar's determination in 1814 that France should have a parliamentary constitution, but it is not easy to arrive at the mixed motives which impelled the autocrat to be its chief advocate.

never shown sign of aptitude for parliamentary institutions would find that they demanded such attention as to make improbable its marching to another Austerlitz or Friedland.

IV

Instead of enjoying in peace the fruit of his victories, consolidating his dynasty together with the glories and resources of France, Napoleon by his insensate ambition made the Restoration with some species of representative government inevitable; and it being necessary to restrict the powers of the restored Bourbons, whose impenitent theories were well known, the parliamentary system became the heritage of that difficult period, fated to survive other constitutional importations then essayed. The principle of ministerial responsibility then made its entry into France, for it is needless to take seriously its

His tutor, Frédéric Laharpe, the Swiss Liberal, had educated him in his ideas, and the Emperor may have had a doctrinaire pleasure in imposing an experiment on a nation outside his own demesne, which he repeated in a modified form and without great success in Poland. According to Pozzo di Borgo, who was left in Paris in 1814 as Russian ambassador after the departure of the allied sovereigns, the Tsar had greatly at heart the welfare of France; but that, from the point of view of the Allies, meant the inability of France to be a terror to foreign powers, and Europe saw in the re-establishment of the Bourbons under a Constitution the guarantee of a long peace, which was imperatively needed. But Alexander's particular anxiety was to prevent Austria from becoming paramount in France. No one thought that Louis XVIII. had ten years to live. So the speedy succession was anticipated of Charles X., who was in the hands of the priests, and the Tsar believed the Jesuits to be working at the orders of Metternich. The Tsar no doubt thought that parliamentary institutions might counteract clerical influence, but he also tried to get a personal share in the government of France by doing his utmost to marry his sister to the Duc de Berry, an alliance which, opposed to Talleyrand, might have changed the history of the century.

introduction at the Revolution, when enunciated in the Constitution of September, 1791, the King being then prisoner at the Tuileries after the flight to Varennes. One reason for its not having worked well is that, for its well-working, it needs a Parliament imbued with traditions. The relations of Parliament and Ministers in England are founded on slowly developed usages and fictions which cannot be put into a new constitution. For example, the doctrine of ministerial responsibility drafted into a written constitution cannot be enforced unless it be laid down that the Ministers are collectively as well as individually responsible; otherwise an ambitious political leader to evade the rule need only get himself named Minister without portfolio. Moreover, at the outset a Council of Ministers has to be by law established, although the English Cabinet, from which it is copied, has no officially recognised existence.

Again, while the principle of ministerial responsibility to Parliament, borrowed from England, is the one feature which is found in all the constitutional régimes set up in France, monarchical or republican, the French have never adopted the English conception of the position and attributes of Ministers. The separation of the powers which Montesquieu admired in our Constitution is not clearly defined in France. In England, the separation of the legislative power from the executive is in theory so distinct that Ministers sit in the elective Chamber of the legislature not by virtue of their being Ministers, but in spite of that fact; so a commoner who receives an appointment from the Crown has to receive a new mandate from the electorate before he can sit in the Lower House. In France a minister sits and debates

in both Houses of Parliament in his capacity of minister. The Constitution permits ministers to be chosen in the Senate or in the Chamber; but there is no reason, constitutional or utilitarian, for selecting them among members of Parliament. In practice, under the Third Republic, only the three portfolios of War, Marine, and Foreign Affairs are ever given to persons who are not senators or deputies; but the holders of them are three of the most important ministers, whose conduct in troubled times might have the gravest consequences. Anomalous as is the confused French system, the faculty of appointing experts to fill ministerial posts calling for technical knowledge is not without advantage, and I have heard a Secretary of State, impatient of the place-hunting solicitations of constituents, declare that to be a minister without being a member of Parliament was the ideal situation of French political life.

But though such ideal situation be filled by a heaven-sent minister he has usually to depart from it after a few months' tenure of it, when the Republican Chamber, interpreting the doctrine of ministerial responsibility in the same spirit as did its Royalist and Orleanist predecessors under the Restoration and the Monarchy of July, upsets the Cabinet. In considering the working of the parliamentary system in France we always get into the same series of vicious circles. If to remedy ministerial instability ministers were no longer responsible to Parliament, the machinery of centralisation might fall into the power of an ambitious band who would dispense with the legislature in governing France. Or if the nomination of the ministers, no longer responsible to Parliament, passed, in reality as well as nominally, into the hands of the Chief of

the State, he, if popular and capable, would be subject to the temptation of making himself dictator by nominating his own creatures, who would abet his schemes of autocracy by means of the redoubtable machinery confided to them. Consequently there is no remedy under a régime of representative government. Ephemeral ministries must succeed one another at brief intervals, the office of minister must remain in misesteem, and parliamentary anarchy must continue, because France possesses a centralised system of administration essential to her existence, and because the French have an ever-latent longing to be governed by a master.

There is nothing in the Constitution of 1875 which prescribes that a ministry shall resign in consequence of an adverse vote in the Chamber. All that the Constitutional Law says on the subject is that "Ministers are jointly and severally liable before the Chambers for the general policy of the Government";[1] but as in England a defeat in the House of Commons usually entails the resignation of a Cabinet, the Government of the Republic would lose its character as a constitutional régime did it not imitate that venerable precedent. To an onlooker the necessity is not self-evident. If a British ministry defeated in the House of Commons remained in office, the malcontent majority might refuse to vote Supply, and by bringing the business of the country to a standstill might force a dissolution or excite a popular agitation. In France the adventitious majority which puts a ministry out is no more representative of the nation's opinions or even of its temporary sentiment than is the minority which supports it. The voting of Supply, owing to the system of the Budget

[1] L.C. 25 Février, 1875, art. 6.

Commission, has not the same importance in the French Chamber[1] as in the House of Commons. Moreover, it is never certain that the improvised majority which upsets a Government will retain its unity of action for a week; while, excepting at crises of acute excitement, such as when M. Jules Ferry fell on the Tonkin question, or when the Panama scandals roused public passion, the fate of a ministry has no more power to stir popular feeling either in the country or in the streets of Paris than has the election of the mayor of a suburban commune. This is not an exaggerated statement. When it is considered what vast issues may depend on the choice of the persons sent to direct the Foreign Office or the War Office, the indifference of the French public at the change of a ministry is phenomenal. It is not merely the frivolous cosmopolitan society of Paris, with its disdain for the Republic, nor cultured circles which have no taste for politics; it is the man in the street and the democracy generally that the fall of a ministry fails to move, and the news-vendors in the kiosks declare that during a ministerial crisis the sale of journals does not perceptibly increase in the capital.

When a ministry after a few months' tenure of office is defeated on a question of confidence, the Prime Minister is expected to convey his resignation to the President of the Republic, who urges him to reconsider his decision;

[1] The withholding of Supply can only be used as a means of putting pressure on a Government at certain seasons of the year. When the Coup d'État of the Seize Mai, 1877, took place, Supply had been voted, and Marshal MacMahon could brave the hostile majority in the Chamber; but when in November of the same year he forced upon the new Chamber, after the elections, the Rochebouet Ministry, it was compelled to resign in a few weeks, as the Chamber refused to vote Supply, and the affairs of the country were on the verge of being brought to a deadlock.

and on his refusal the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber are summoned to the Élysée to counsel the Chief of the State. The result of their advice is that on the succeeding days politicians of various Republican groups are sent for by the President, and it is officially announced that one of them is authorised to form a new Cabinet. The English practice is not at this point followed. The member of Parliament so honoured has not his door beset with crowds of anxious placemen. It is he who has to seek out his possible colleagues, and the newspapers record his drives about Paris in a cab in search of a ministry, until he returns to the Élysée fatigued and usually unsuccessful, as the tradition is that the first person entrusted with the task shall not succeed. At last a more fortunate essay is made, and the journals announce that a politician of more or less note, though rarely designated in advance by public opinion, has formed an Opportunist, a Concentration, a Radical, or a Moderate Government. To a stranger attempting to study French institutions it, in most cases, appears that the composition of the Cabinet has no relation whatever to the cause of the downfall of its predecessor, for indeed it sometimes happens that places are impartially found in the new one for deputies both of the majority and of the minority in the division which produced the crisis.

After their formal introduction to the President of the Republic, without the administration of oath or other ceremony, the first business of the members of a new ministry is to take possession of their official dwellings; for they are all sumptuously lodged in palaces or at least have the option of so living during their term of office. The residence of the Minister of the Interior at the Place

Beauvau is considered compulsory; for as the chief agent of the centralised power, he ought always to be on the spot to direct it. Of the others there are a few who resist the temptation of brief magnificence, and not disturbing their hearths, never set foot in the gilded saloons, excepting to hold an official reception.[1] But as a rule the new ministers, sometimes urged by domestic pressure, like to taste all the joys of their passing greatness, and in this they are perhaps not to blame, in spite of the satire of the wits of the boulevards. Certain politicians who frequently return to office have a varied knowledge of the charms and deficiencies of the different ministerial residences, regarding them somewhat as a wandering idler compares the furnished houses which he tenants, less inexpensively, one winter at Nice, the next summer at Deauville, and the next season at Pau. In an English ballad, the popularity of which has for many years given a debased idea of our poetical and musical instinct, the hero declares his preference for his humble home to the palaces wherein he periodically roams. Such vicissitudes are not within the experience of the British concert-goers who disingenuously applaud the sentiment. Yet he is not a mere creature of the poet's fancy; he is a French Minister under a constitutional régime, extracting philosophy from the working of the parliamentary system in France.

The oft-recurring installation of fresh Ministers is a

[1] M. de Freycinet, who was Minister of War for the phenomenally long period of nearly five consecutive years, never went to live in the rue St. Dominique; and M. Méline, who has had an unparalleled length of experience of office, having been an Under-Secretary in the Jules Simon Ministry of 1876, also prefers the security of his own home, as do some of the more promising younger ministers.

fertile subject for Parisian humour. If the new-comer be a "ministrable" who is not in his first term of official life he falls at once into the routine of his department. But the chiefs of the bureaucracy are said to be apt to patronise the inexperienced statesman. First in apparent dignity in a French Government office is the Huissier of the Minister, who somewhat corresponds in rank to the functionaries known at Whitehall as "messengers," though greatly superior to those worthy servants of the Crown in grandeur and importance; for the ante-chambers of a French Minister are thronged with a crowd as vast, if not as picturesque, as that which frequented the corridors at Versailles while the King was being dressed. No wonder that the seekers of place and promotion, or even the senators and deputies who come to protect them, should respect the stately wearer of the silver chain as the personification of stable government; for he is always there to receive them when they come in the spring or return in the autumn; whereas the minister who promises a place has often to leave the decree conferring it for a successor to sign.[1]

A member of the Embassy at Paris which is reputed to be the best informed, and which has the greatest need to be vigilant, once said to me that the Huissier at

[1] The tradition of the Huissier as the symbol of governmental stability dates from before the Third Republic. The Duc d'Aumale used to relate that his father at the first reception which he gave as King of the French in 1830 was familiarly greeted by an aged Huissier who had been introducing the company to the Royal presence; and he explained that he was on duty in the ante-chamber of Danton in 1792, when the young Louis Philippe brought to the Convention the despatches of Dumouriez announcing the victory of Valmy. The Huissier had performed the same functions under all the succeeding régimes with fewer vicissitudes than those experienced by the King.

the Quai d'Orsay was the representative of continuity of policy at the French Foreign Office; and the sarcasm, stripped of its offensiveness, has some truth in it, for it was a tribute from unfriendly lips to the debt which France owes to its permanent bureaucracy. As a matter of fact, continuity of foreign policy has been one of the most remarkable phenomena of the parliamentary anarchy of the Third Republic, and the cause of it has been recognised by the public, which displayed satisfaction when an accomplished official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who, with his colleagues, had raised the position of France in Europe, was made titular Secretary of State in preference to a politician.

Although the bureaucracy of France has infinitely more to do with the government of the country than has the civil service in England, the position of the most important permanent officials is less conspicuous in Paris than in London. In England each department of the central administration is directed by a permanent Under-Secretary, the perpetual head of the office, whose name as the representative of its tradition is constantly before the public. In France in each Ministry there are several directors, each having under his control a separate branch of the office; and above them all is the one man concentrating in his person all the powers, the casual politician, here to-day and gone to-morrow, but in theory the all-powerful Minister, whose nominal attributes, conferred by autocracy, are still the object of outward marks of honour.

If a French minister remained in office for a considerable time, his principal private secretary, the chief of his cabinet, as he is officially called, would become practically the Under-Secretary of State, the position in an ad-

ministrative sense having generally a greater importance than the corresponding post in the English public service. This is in accordance with the principle on which the government of France is carried on under the combined system partly invented by Napoleon and partly imported from England. Although a French minister may not be a person of importance when he takes office, and though he may resume his original condition when he quits it, during its tenure he is almighty. In Paris lodged like a prince, on his progress through the country he is saluted like a viceroy, journeying at the public cost.[1] A more futile method of spending public money in honour of ministers deserves mention. If a Cabinet, in temporary command of a majority in either House, be struck with admiration at a speech of one of its members, the assembly is asked to authorise its being printed and posted among the official proclamations in all the 36,000 communes of France. Why importance is attached to the privilege is difficult to say, for though on many an Hôtel de Ville and Mairie, urban and rural, I have seen placarded parliamentary orations on manifold topics, I have never once been disturbed in my perusal of them by a French citizen, or even by a non-elector of tender years.[2]

[1] The expenses of ministerial journeys sometimes provoke an ineffective debate in the Chamber. M. Yves Guyot, when charged with thus spending too much public money, proved that there were ministers whose journeys were more expensive than his. In 1889 he being Minister of Public Works cost the country £260 for his journeys, while in 1888 his two predecessors together spent £680 in travelling. M. Yves Guyot added, "The ministers never see a centime of the money, most of which goes in presents to railway officials and in entertaining mayors and municipal authorities" (Chambre des Députés, 14 Mai, 1893). It should be said that the cost of conveyance of ministers, including special trains, has to be borne by the Railway Companies.

[2] This waste of public money is sometimes accorded by the Chamber to

It is difficult to pass a definite judgment on the ability and character of the Ministers of the Third Republic. Leaving out of the question Gambetta, who had practically no ministerial experience after the War, and M. Léon Say, who, in the plenitude of his powers, was as we have seen never included in any of the twenty Cabinets formed during the last fourteen years of his life, it would be rash to say that the régime has produced a politician worthy of the name of statesman. M. Jules Ferry was by far the most capable Minister of the Republic after the advent to power of the Republicans, but as his most marked achievements were first to sow everlasting rancour and division in the nation in carrying his educational measures, and then to draw upon himself unmerited unpopularity in directing a patriotic colonial policy, he showed himself destitute of an essential quality of a statesman, — the faculty of gauging the sentiments of the people he is called upon to govern.

While the proportion of distinguished men is lamentably small in the ministries of the Republic, care must be taken not to accept without qualification the picture drawn of ministers by the contemporary French press which is wont to describe the successive governors of the country as persons of abject character and parts. No doubt few of them represent the best elements in the French nation, and most of them are much inferior to the ministers with whom the Republic commenced its career under M. Thiers. But many, though unsuited to the

the discourses of private members. The belief in the advantage of the "affichage" of a speech probably arises from the fact that it was formerly a privilege prohibited to members, even when they offered to do it at their own expense, unless authorised by a vote of the Chamber. Now any deputy can placard his speeches at his own expense or at that of his group.

situation of a Minister of France, are men whose abilities might have secured them an honourable position in their professions, and some of them are quite of the social and intellectual level of a new type of English minister, which has of late years been seen in both Liberal and Conservative administrations. It must be borne in mind that as there are no other offices than those of cabinet rank at the disposition of French members of Parliament, a politician of the class of one who in our country would be a subordinate official for a term of years, is in France entrusted with a ministerial portfolio for a term of months.

Moreover, the composition of the ministries must needs reflect the inferior composition of the legislature. Seven out of the nine members of Parliament in a Cabinet are usually deputies, and our analysis of the Chamber has shown that it does not contain material for relays of ministers who would do credit to the French nation. From the election of M. Carnot in 1887 to the formation of the Méline Cabinet in 1896 — not counting the soldiers and sailors who held the portfolios of War and Marine — about sixty different persons were ministers. Of them twenty-two were advocates, seven doctors, seven journalists, seven persons connected with commerce, six professors, and the remaining dozen were made up of ex-functionaries, retired officers, engineers, with M. Casimir-Périer, the solitary representative of the wealthy and leisured class. The lawyers and doctors, from whose ranks, as we have seen, come most of the professional politicians, have thus supplied about half the ministers in this period, the lawyers being out of all proportion even to their large number in Parliament, and the most generous estimate could not impute distinction to more than

two or three of these representatives of law and physic. The professors and the engineers, though only nine in number, include three-fourths of the Ministers whose names convey any idea to their countrymen.[1]

The result of this analysis seems to be that of the politicians who attain office under the Third Republic the most creditable examples are those who have undergone the technical training of the École Polytechnique or the University; that few of the lawyers, doctors, and other professional politicians rise above mediocrity; and that there are scarcely any men of business among them whose commercial aptitude would fit them to administer a department of the State. To one acquainted with the different phases of French society, the contrast is painfully striking between the level of intelligence of political circles, and that of the financial and industrial world. At Lyons, at Bordeaux, and other industrial or commercial centres, the men who develop the wealth and maintain the prestige of those cities, by their high character, their public spirit, and their manifest ability, seem to be designated to direct the affairs of the country; but if by rare hazard one of them is elected to Parlia-

[1] MM. Méline and Floquet were the best-known advocates who have been ministers during the period: none of the doctors are famous. The professors and engineers have been men of ability. Of the three engineers MM. de Freycinet and Cavaignac, both, like M. Carnot, pupils of the École Polytechnique, were much above the average of ministers. All the six professors were men of talent: MM. Berthelot, Constans, Burdeau, Dupuy, Lebon, and Rambaud. The last two became Ministers immediately on entering the Chamber and Senate respectively. If M. Lebon be reckoned as a professor, perhaps M. Ribot, whom I have counted as an ex-functionary, should be added, both of them having been lecturers at the École Libre des Sciences Politiques, and not in the public service of the University, which strictly alone gives the title of professor.

ment, he remains a private member.[1] It would almost seem as though the taint of trade were as grave an obstacle to entering a Radical or Opportunist Cabinet under the Republic as it was under the Old Régime to getting a commission in a royal regiment of nobles.

M. Félix Faure, for example, the President of the Republic, was a man of better parts than nine-tenths of the lawyers, doctors, and journalists who were ministers during the fourteen years that he sat for Havre; yet though he showed, by accepting under-secretaryships, his willingness to take office, he never attained cabinet rank until six months before his election to the supreme power. During those years, in twenty consecutive Cabinets, in only three of them was the Minister of Commerce a man of business.[2] The direction of the department of trade by men versed in commercial affairs would not save the commercial supremacy of France on the continent; but it is significant that she has lost that position during the heyday of the parliamentary régime, while it is certain that under no other system the administration of the laws which in France stringently regulate the national commerce and industry would have been allowed to remain in inexpert hands at such a crisis.

In finding fault with the exclusion from public affairs

[1] *E.g.* M. Aynard, a distinguished banker and leading citizen of Lyons, who had as little chance of being included in a Cabinet as M. Léon Say, to whose school he belonged.

[2] The Minister of Commerce is sometimes chosen for curious reasons. One politician who held that office in two Cabinets was a provincial engineer chiefly known in Paris as a composer whose operas had brought him into conflict with a theatrical manager. President Grévy insisted on a portfolio being given to one of the deputies of a department which had strengthened the Republican cause, and this hazard put the Ministry of Commerce into the hands of a musician.

of the most practical class which France produces, I am not advocating the principle, never accepted in England, that a minister should be chosen for professional qualifications. Indeed, while under the Third Republic lawyers administer the Ministry of Commerce, and doctors that of Agriculture, in certain departments that principle is strictly recognised, the practice of setting an admiral over the Navy, and a general over the Army, having, as we have seen, been followed by the appointment of a Foreign Office official to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By a curious paradox the press had accepted with equanimity for many years the appointment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of manifestly untrained politicians. One had been Minister of Agriculture, another was strange to office, a third was a provincial lawyer. Yet when one day a man of science of European renown was sent to the Quai d'Orsay, the uproar raised was such that one unacquainted with the history of the Third Republic might have thought that under it the exterior policy of France had been directed by a series of Metternichs or Bismarcks. If M. Berthelot was not an ideal Foreign Secretary, he was superior to many of his predecessors, and he was well spoken of by both French and foreign diplomatists. Nevertheless, it being rare for a politician to be known by name beyond France in any capacity, the journalists made merry over the idea of a chemist being Foreign Minister. To an onlooker the attacks seemed to be directed not against the inappropriateness of the appointment, but against the personal superiority of the man above the mediocrity which seems to be accepted in political France as the necessary standard for its rulers.

The rife spirit of revolt against distinction and superi-

ority receives satisfaction from the results of the parliamentary system. The wonder is that France is not worse governed under it, and it must be acknowledged that considering who the majority of the ministers are, and what has been their previous training, they acquit themselves with remarkable success; that is to say, they get through their brief terms of office without serious mishap. This is in chief measure due to the organisation of the bureaucracy; but it may also in part be accounted for by a certain instinct which the French undoubtedly have for improvising political functions. An English usher of lowly birth who, after rising to be assistant master in provincial grammar schools, got into Parliament, would probably be both uncomfortable and ridiculous if he found himself Prime Minister seven years later; but when this happens in France the promoted school-master, without any pretension to singular talent, gets through his work at the Place Beauvau and at the Palais Bourbon with as easy assurance as though he were teaching a class in a country Lycée.

This is a tradition of the Revolution. When all the sons of the new era considered that politics began in 1789 it was evident that in 1790 no one, whatever his age or experience, could have had more than a year's political training. The guillotine, and later Napoleon, hindered the experiment being tested of the production of full-blown statesmen without preliminary cultivation; but the theory survived. At the outset of the change of things Dumont of Geneva, the interpreter of Bentham, who knew England and France equally well, having been the tutor of Lord Shelburne's children at Bowood till he came with Romilly to Paris, where he became the friend

and helper of Mirabeau, wrote: "If a hundred people in London and in Paris respectively were stopped in the streets and asked to undertake the government of the country, ninety-nine would refuse in London and ninety-nine would accept in Paris, — a Frenchman believes himself capable of tackling all difficulties with un peu d'esprit." I know not if that modesty lingers in England; but the buoyant confidence of the Constituent Assembly still abounds in France, and is extremely useful to the working of the brief-ministry system under the parliamentary régime. The Revolutionary time inspired ordinary men with confidence to undertake with a light heart even mightier responsibilities than the direction of a ministry of the State. States themselves had rulers improvised for them in France in that astounding epoch. When it was coming to an end, Joseph Bonaparte, having been law student and army commissary, King of Naples and King of Spain, and having descended from both thrones even before Fontainebleau and Elba, used to criticise the acts of his Imperial younger brother, complaining that had it not been for Napoleon he would have continued peacefully his reign till the Escurial claimed him. "Nothing astonished Joseph in his incredible fortune," said one who had heard him speak. When one thinks of the vicissitudes of those vertiginous days, it is not surprising that Frenchmen and sons of the Revolution accept placidly such minor gifts of fate as are distributed under a parliamentary régime.

CHAPTER VI

CORRUPTION UNDER THE REPUBLIC

I

At the entrance of the most imposing of the avenues which flank the Champs Élysées, there stands a substantial house of somewhat pretentious architecture. The stately thoroughfare named after the victory of Napoleon most cherished by the French abounds in sumptuous dwellings, so in the Avenue d'Iéna this hôtel is not conspicuous among its neighbours; yet it is endowed with a notoriety painful to passers-by who are honest lovers of the Republic, whose President reared these walls with savings gathered, it was said, during his tenure of the chief magistracy. The suspicion that M. Grévy had turned his high office to profit, and the certainty that he had allowed a near relative to make of the Élysée a centre of corruption, would have infallibly terminated the Republican régime in France had not its opponents acted with a combination of feebleness and baseness which characterised the Boulangist movement. It is not necessary here to recapitulate the incidents which drove M. Grévy from power, as the Wilson scandals were a few years later made insignificant by others which showed that political corruption was wide-spread in the Repub-

lic; but the tradition attaching to the house to which he retired makes it a sad monument to warn doctrinaires that virtue is not the special appurtenance of any one form of government.

The association of purity of morals with the republican form of government, for which history furnishes no justification, is one of the most striking results of the pseudo-classical basis of the French Revolution. Like many other influences which have turned the course of history in modern France, much of it may be attributed to Montesquieu, who, before Rousseau had begun to upheave society with his sentimental sophistries, had, in the *Esprit des Lois*, with illustrations from antiquity, declared that virtue is not the principle of monarchical government and that morals are purer in a republic.[1] The French theorists of the eighteenth century and their disciples did not as a rule go to original texts for their ideas. They contented themselves with translations and versions, and it is a curious fact that two priests and courtiers, born at an interval of two hundred years, were perhaps the chief agents for disseminating in the kingdom of France the theory of the virtuousness of the republics of Greece and Rome. One of them, a humanist of the sixteenth century, Jacques Amyot, was tutor to the sons of Henri II. when he finished his *Plutarch's Lives*, for which his pupil Charles IX. made him grand almoner; the other, the Abbé Barthélemy, owed to the Court the thirty years of leisure needful to produce his *Travels of the Young Anacharsis in Greece*, which attractive picture of life in the Athenian Republic was published on the eve of the Revolution.

[1] *De l'Esprit des Lois*, liv. iii. c. 5, and liv. iv. c. 2.

Five years earlier, in 1783, had appeared a popular new edition of Amyot's *Plutarch*. Its title-page announced that it was printed "with the approbation of the King" whose downfall was to be hastened by this publication, which put into the hands of the theorists concrete figures to drape with the vague doctrines of Rousseau. The classical allusions which inflate the oratory of the Revolutionary assemblies are mostly drawn hence or from *Anacharsis*, and the author of the latter owed his escape from the massacres of September, 1792, to the renown of his book, which had enabled the overturners of the monarchy to evoke the humanity and purity of republican government, whereof Marat and Danton were the first exemplars. When Charlotte Corday came from Caen the next year to send the former to his fate, in her scanty baggage she brought a volume of Amyot's *Lives*. Of Madame Roland one who had seen the Revolution wrote: "She devoured Plutarch and St. Augustine: her spirit became Republican and her soul Christian." Thus in every phase of the Revolution, in every party, all who took part in it were steeped in the pseudo-classicism of which the first superficial principle was that virtue could only thrive under a republic, so that M. Brunetière, who sometimes puts verities in epigrammatic form, once said to me, "It was Plutarch who made the French Revolution."

It is needless to indicate the falseness of the analogy which the theorists of the last century drew between the republics of old, with their servile populations, and modern democracies, every member of which was to have equal rights. Moreover, all that was corrupt at Athens, as well as all that was beautiful and good, developed

under republican institutions; while at Rome, long before the sombre narrative of Tacitus and the vehement stanzas of Juvenal had portrayed for posterity the Empire at its zenith, pens not less immortal had related the enormities of Catiline and of Clodius, both products of the Republic. The very sound of that word to doctrinaires seemed vaguely to suggest virtue, though its meaning no one quite apprehended, and even Montesquieu defined it in a manner which might include the British Monarchy as at present constituted.[1] In our country the austerity of the Puritan Commonwealth, succeeded by the reaction of the Restoration, gave a certain plausibility to the theory; but the Protectorate of Cromwell was rarely cited by the forerunners of the French Revolution, who neither admired its ethical doctrine nor regarded it as a democratic government.

When France got a Republic its chief domestic occupation at first was the wholesale slaughter of Republicans; but when the leaders of all the groups had guillotined one another, a period of relative peacefulness at home ensued, and the Directory must be considered the first experiment of republican government in France. The new rulers, not content with reviving the licentiousness of the court of Louis XV., inaugurated in France the era of corruption under popular government, and the decadence of republican ideas, displayed in the readiness with which Bonaparte was acclaimed as its master by the

[1] Before Montesquieu's time the term "la République" was often used by French writers (La Fontaine for example) in the general sense of "the State." Thus under the Third Republic priests of monarchical sympathies maintain that they can, without outrage to conscience, entone the *Domine salvam fac Rempublicam*, prescribed by the Government under the Concordat, at the end of mass. See p. 408.

nation, was due not merely to the governmental anarchy, but to the corrupt régime of the Republic, which disillusioned the doctrinaires of the Revolution. Since then there have been in Europe no other republics of sufficient size and importance to afford material for inference; but on the great continents of the West, where states enjoying that democratic form of government abound, the standard of public morals is not sufficiently high to be the envy of the monarchies of the Old World.

The tradition of republican purity is like that of the smoothness of the Mediterranean, which survives the adverse testimony of the ages; for since the Teucrians seeking the Latian shores were buffeted by Æolus at Juno's prayer, or, centuries later, the apostolic shipmen were driven up and down in Adria by a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon, that dolorous sea has ever been subject to the agitations which to-day disturb the theories of travellers fleeing the storm-clouds of the north and hoping to find the coasts of Carthage or of Italy bathed with sunlit ripples. There are days of flawless perfection on the Mediterranean just as there are men of spotless repute in republican governments; but days of exceeding beauty are perhaps less rare on seas without pretensions to calm, and upright statesmen are perhaps more common in monarchies which have no peculiar attribute of purity.

It would, therefore, be unfair to expect a higher standard of morals under the Third Republic than under the Second Empire, but for the reproaches uttered against that régime by Republicans who, under Louis Napoleon, ascribed all the ills which befell humanity in France to the Imperial rule, and who, in their optimist belief in

the purifying effect of their cherished form of government, used to cry, "Only let us found the Republic, and then you will see the moral reform we shall effect in France."[1] The utterance of that aspiration and its failure to be realised point once more to the tendency of the French to find in formulas and theories cures for the ills inherent to human societies. After the First Empire, as we have seen, it was the British Constitution which was to reinvigorate the nation; during the Second Empire it was the Republic which was to cleanse France of corruption in high places. Towards the close of M. Carnot's Presidency a popular and mordant caricaturist[2] depicted the Republic as an obese demi-rep decked out in an attire unbecoming to her mature age, and, as she passes in review before a group of elderly politicians, they exclaim, "And to think how lovely she was in the days of the Empire." If such a portrait of the Republic exaggerates her defects, it is certain that her form and character little resemble the ideal honestly hoped for by some of those who, inspired by a sincere and utopian love of liberty, strove to upset the Imperial Government.

The glitter of the court of the Tuileries having dazzled all Europe, and the second downfall of the Napoleonic dynasty having involved France in irreparable disaster, the expositors of the causes of the French defeat laid such stress upon the public and private corruption of the supporters of the Imperial régime, whether politicians, functionaries, courtiers, or speculators, that the idea grew that the new rulers of the land were to be the

[1] "Laissez-nous fonder la République et vous verrez comment nous moraliserons la France" (Eugène Pelletan).

[2] M. Forain.

incarnation of a chastened nation. That the extravagances of the court did not encourage a high tone of morality is undisputed. That the embellishment of the capital, to form a sumptuous setting for the fêtes which attracted thither all the pleasure-seekers of the globe, fostered a spirit of jobbery infecting all the departments of the State cannot be doubted. That the mal-organisation of the army which succumbed to the forces of Germany was partly due to the dishonest incapacity of persons in authority is one of the accepted causes of the rout of France. At the same time, it is certain that had Louis Napoleon been more sagacious in diplomacy, had he treated Italy with more foreseeing skill at Villafranca, and not left Austria to be crushed at Sadowa, he would not have had to take the field alone against united Germany; and with French arms victorious the world would have heard very little of the demoralisation of the Second Empire, though not one moral fault had been uncommitted of those laid to its charge. If the cannonading of Saarbrück, a bombardment *ad usum Delphini*, had with the aid of an effective ally been followed by a Magenta and a Solferino, instead of by Mars-la-Tour and Sedan, the presence of a child of fourteen on a battle-field, instead of being reprobated as the final meretricious display of a corrupt system, would have been cited as a feat not less meritorious than that of the Black Prince at Créçy; and, when the Prince Imperial had succeeded as Emperor of the French, Meissonier would have added the "Baptism of Fire" to his gallery illustrating the Napoleonic legend.

Laxity of morals, whether public or private, displayed by persons in authority is of more detrimental example

in a republican government than in a monarchy; and conversely, an exemplary court has a greater effect for good in a nation than has an ill-regulated one for evil. In England a continuance of the practices of Carlton House would not have corrupted the nation, but would have terminated the Hanoverian succession; while, on the other hand, the pure example of the court of Queen Victoria was an unmixed advantage to the English people, and the death of the Prince Consort, by withdrawing that influence, was probably the most important national event in the second half of the nineteenth century. But in this respect no comparison can be instituted between England and France. We take pride in the Crown of England as the symbol of the British Empire and of the supremacy of the British race; but we have a peculiar reverence for our royal house, due to our affection for the Sovereign, who has set a blameless example to two complete generations of her people, and also due to the fact that in a nation where there has never been, as formerly in France, a line of demarcation between nobility and commonalty the royal family alone stands aloft as a caste apart,—for which special reason marriages of its members with subjects are to be deprecated. In modern France dynasties are only temporary expedients, never accepted by a unanimous nation, so that the most upright of sovereigns could have little opportunity of making his example felt. In the case of the Second Empire, if its frivolous influences were unduly extensive, it is because the preponderant position of Paris in the country, and the perennial tendency of that city to gaiety caused the luxurious excesses of the Tuileries to be reflected over the French people to an abnormal degree.

The converse proposition that laxity of morals in a republican régime is more widely pernicious than under a monarchy, requires no special qualification when applied to France. If, therefore, the malady which tainted an autocracy reappears under a republic with its purifying pretensions, the last state of the country is worse than the first. After the Irish famine economists ascribed its baleful consequences to the fact that the diet of the peasantry was the simplest of food-stuffs, so that when the potato failed starvation was inevitable. Thus also if France, having reduced herself to the simplest regimen, finds that it fails to supply her with moral sustenance, it is clear that she is in a situation more unfavourable than when the Republic existed only as a resource to fall back upon.

II

Of the various parliamentary scandals with which the career of the Republic has been chequered, the most typical was the Panama affair; and the tenacity with which the French public perpetuates the sordid legend is a symptom of its demoralising belief in the venality of legislators. The thrift of France had subscribed fifty millions sterling for the piercing of the Isthmus of Panama, undertaken by M. de Lesseps, the maker of the Suez Canal; and in 1892, most of that money having disappeared, it was known that he and others were to be tried on the charge of misappropriating it. Considering the colossal sum lost by the French public in this enterprise, little interest was taken in the coming trials till it

was suddenly stirred by the dramatic suicide of a well-known financier, closely connected with the Panama Company and with leading politicians, driven to death, it was said, by menaces and demands of blackmail. Then succeeded a period, the like of which has never been witnessed in a great capital save at a time of revolution. In the Chambers wholesale denunciations of ministers, senators, and deputies took the place of debate. A parliamentary committee was charged to sift accusations brought against members of selling their votes which passed the law authorising the Panama Company to solicit money from the public; but the inconclusive proceedings excited rather than allayed the popular thirst for scandal. The people of Paris seemed to breathe an atmosphere of corruption and of delation. Morning and evening the journals announced each day the arrest of some prominent politician, or the details of a midnight domiciliary search, and the sinister query of the Reign of Terror was often on men's lips "*à quand une nouvelle charrette?*"

Emotion reached its height, and the sense of national shame its depth, when the Prime Minister of France ordered the prosecution of two of his own chosen colleagues in the Cabinet for corrupt traffic of their office, demanding of the Chamber that parliamentary immunity should be withdrawn from the men who sat by him at the council board. These two ministers were eventually discharged by the magistrates, after a secret inquiry, and it would seem that the prosecutions were set on foot with undue recklessness. But the error was even more significant than would have been the conviction of the ministers. Had proofs of their guilt been made public

it would have been said that the Cabinet to save its own good name was forced to pursue its unworthy members; but that the first Minister of the Republic should have been moved thus gratuitously to compromise his ministry and his party by announcing to the civilised world, without overwhelming proof, that the colleagues he had chosen to govern France were suspected criminals, revealed his belief that the political society in which he lived was sapped with corruption.

M. de Lesseps, tried without a jury, received a sentence of imprisonment, afterwards quashed on a technical point; and his son, arraigned at the assizes with a band of politicians for giving and receiving bribes in connection with the passing of the Panama Bills, was, with one or two persons of no importance, found guilty and sent to gaol. A hundred deputies and senators were said to be implicated in the matter. Eleven only were prosecuted by the Government, of whom six had been Cabinet Ministers, one having been Premier, and two others holders of the Seals of Justice. Only four of these members of Parliament appeared before a jury, the prosecutions during the secret preliminary inquiry being abandoned against the best known of the accused. Of the four who stood a public trial, M. Baihaut, an insignificant ex-Minister, confessed, unluckily for himself, and received a severe sentence; but the jury acquitted the others, interpreting the general sentiment that the real criminals would be further screened if these minor offenders were punished. Public opinion was thus left in a state of unsatisfied suspicion. The proceedings in the courts and in Parliament had stirred up the mud of the political morasses without cleansing the land of those

malarial deposits. Nothing was clear but that millions had disappeared, and that the persons punished could account for only a trifling sum. It was, indeed, inconceivable that the entire nation should have been thrown into agitation, and that ministers should have been moved to arraign their own colleagues, if the real cause of the emotion were the paltry peculation of one minor politician.

It is a delicate matter for a stranger to sit in judgment on charges brought by Frenchmen against Frenchmen; but as no study of parliamentary institutions under the Republic would be complete without some account of the unhappy scandals which periodically affect the legislature, one may avoid the invidious task by noting their moral effect on the nation, together with the opinions of French people on the subject. In this way light may be thrown on the theory that representative institutions reflect the character of a people; for it is certain that the French, as a nation, are remarkable for their integrity, which, combined with self-denying industry, is of a high order; yet no Frenchman would, without serious qualification, predicate the same of the whole body of legislators. I therefore propose to deal with this question by citing the statements of persons implicated in the Panama affair, and the comments upon it of some of those who worthily represent the average sentiment of the French nation.

The sentence passed on the aged M. de Lesseps produced wide-spread indignation in France, although his sanguine recklessness in projecting a repetition of his Egyptian triumph had ruined thousands of French homes. The peculiar nature of his previous popularity quickened that feeling, it having been won on the eve of the

national disasters by a durable achievement, which had caused its author to be acclaimed abroad, when he crossed the mutilated frontier, as the upholder of the genius of France, further discredited since the War by politicians for whose sordid sins he was now the scapegoat. Elected to the Academy, he was not asked for the wonted literary credentials, for, as Renan said to him at his reception,[1] "After Lamartine, you have, I think, been the man the most beloved of our century"; ominous words in the lips of a master of irony; for the lyrical promoter of the downfall of the Orleans dynasty had to compare himself before he died to the vanquished of Pharsalia, to Belisarius, and to other neglected heroes fallen from a high estate.

M. Baihaut, who pleaded guilty to having taken a bribe of £12,000 when Minister of Public Works, was one of those statesmen produced in abundance under the Republic whose names convey no idea to their countrymen. He was, however, in intellectual training the superior of many of his political peers, having been educated as an engineer at the École Polytechnique, and it was in a Cabinet presided over by another pupil of that school, M. de Freycinet, that he held a portfolio. His confession threw an instructive light on the psychological attitude to their public duties of politicians of a certain type. "In proposing the bill legalising the Lottery Loan," he said, "I considered that I was performing a useful and laudable action which might have saved the Panama Company. Having brought in the bill I was assailed by the temptation to consider myself merely as an engineer, and as having in that capacity aided a

[1] April 23, 1885.

company in economising its funds, thus acquiring the consequent right to a share in the profits."[1]

This member of a respectable profession who had left it for the more lucrative trade of politics, hastening to secure in it a comfortable competence, conscious of the brief duration of ministries and of the uncertainty of return to office, is, it is to be feared, not a solitary example of the results of the parliamentary system. He was the only politician punished for the traffic of his vote, and sympathy for him might have been greater but for the fact that four years before, amid the applause of his party, he had obtained the condemnation for libel of one who had anticipated his own confession. In his election address of the same year, referring to the clearing of his character, he declared that: "It behooved devoted Republicans to repress the licence of a press which does not shrink from calumniating and sullying even the best of citizens." So proud was the ex-Minister of this sentiment, that he had it appended to his biography in the official handbook of the Chamber of 1889, from which he was expelled.

Dr. Cornelius Herz is a witness whose unsupported evidence might be regarded with suspicion, but he only echoed general opinion in France when he said, "Baihaut's real crime was his confession; for there is many a colleague of his in the Chamber who ought to be his colleague in Étampes gaol." The events which terminated the French career of Dr. Herz may have biassed his judgment against the politicians of the Republic, but no one in Europe had more intimate knowledge of their lives and methods. The cosmopolitan financiers who, from

[1] Procès de Corruption, Cour d'Assises de la Seine, Mars, 1893.

lands beyond the Rhine, have crossed the Vosges and the Jura to regulate the riches of France, have not perhaps all the influence ascribed to them by anti-Semitic zealots; but Dr. Herz, who was as curious a figure as any portrayed by Balzac, was undoubtedly a potent manipulator of the finances and politics of the Republic. For the part he played in the Panama affair he incurred a sentence of imprisonment passed in his absence, but his acts thus requited were committed at a time when Republican ministers and politicians vied with one another to do him honour. The offspring of Bavarian Jews, he esteemed so lightly the accident of his birth in a French frontier department that he became a citizen of the United States, and the official register records that it was as an American savant that he received from the Republic an exalted rank in the Legion of Honour,—so high that it was never attained by Charcot, whose scientific attainments were of more popular celebrity. But "science" is not an exact term, and the peculiar knowledge possessed by Dr. Herz, which ministers splendidly recognised, perhaps deserved to be thus denominated.

Of the money abstracted from the Panama funds for illegitimate purposes, apart from the amounts said to have been spent in direct bribery, enormous subsidies were made to persons who claimed that they could be useful to the Company in Parliament and in the press. The magnitude of the sums paid by commercial enterprises in France to organs of publicity is an important feature of journalism in a country where the lucrative commodity of advertisement takes a less well-defined form than is usual in English newspapers. If a journal which demands an exorbitant payment for its recommen-

dation of a speculative undertaking be owned by a senator or a deputy, the subsidy cannot perhaps be described as the purchase of a member of Parliament, though it may affect a vote when the project is submitted to the Chambers. But this subsidising of the press has produced an abuse more dangerous and subtle than that of the direct bribery of individual legislators. M. Floquet's connection with the Panama affair cost him the Presidency of the Chamber, though he was not deemed to have made personal profit out of it. Nevertheless, he avowed that when Prime Minister he had laid hands upon £12,000 of the funds subscribed by his humble countrymen for the piercing of the Isthmus, and had utilised it in combating the enemies of the Government on questions unconnected with the Panama Canal. He, moreover, justified his action: he would not deign, he said, to plead that he had an exceptional crisis to cope with (the Boulangist movement being at its height in 1888); he took his stand on the general principle that under normal circumstances it was the right and the duty of a ministry to supervise the distribution of such subsidies so as to prevent them from being used to the prejudice of the Government.[1]

No theory more perilous was ever enunciated in a representative assembly. It is a monstrous doctrine that the chief of a ministry should sanction and legalise the misappropriation of private property by demanding a share of it for the purposes of the State; or that the mere announcement by company promoters that they have money to bestow on persons likely to procure them the countenance of Parliament and of Executive should justify a minister in soliciting quietly a share of the bounty,

[1] Chambre des Députés: Séance du 23 Décembre, 1892.

thus committing the Government to the support of the enterprise, whatever its merits. Requests for money, moreover, addressed by ministers to a company dependent on ministerial favour have the effect of commands: *stipendia orant; preces erant sed quibus contradici non posset.*[1] It was not to supply electioneering funds that the peasant or the shopkeeper offered his frugal savings to the promoters of the Canal; and that the ministry of the moment had the right to make such a levy was a sophistry worthy of an unscrupulous despotism. The pretence was that the investors were members of the electorate which had entrusted the Government with the general interests of the nation; but even if French ministries lasted for years, and were supported by vast majorities in the country, the principle laid down would be indefensible. At this particular crisis had a national plebiscite been taken the opponents of the Ministry would have had a great majority, and as, moreover, most of the thrifty in France take no interest in politics, the actual supporters of the Government must have been very few among the investors on whose money M. Floquet demanded tribute "in the superior interest of the Republic."

If M. Floquet's Ministry, which lasted for ten months, and M. Rouvier's for half a year, could plead that "the superior interest of the Republic" justified their levy of subsidies from a commercial enterprise to keep them in possession of ministerial advantages, it is easy to see whither this doctrine would lead. Private members of Parliament who owned journals would argue that the interest of the State required similar grants for their

[1] Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. 46.

prints which might by a change of ministry become Government organs; while other legislators would plausibly reason that the accident of not having capital invested in the press did not exclude them from the sphere of "the superior interest of the Republic," and that it was as legitimate for them so to seek the means of paying for their households and their pleasures, as for their journalistic colleagues thus to satisfy their printers and their paper-merchants. If the Panama affair had been an isolated incident in the history of the Republic, it would not have been necessary to dwell upon this point; but it is to be feared that this principle has been followed by ministers both before and since the adventure of M. Floquet, who paid a severe penalty for his adoption of it.

From the mental process which warrants a politician in taking irregular subsidies to maintain him in his political situation to that which condones the application of such funds to his private needs the transition is perilously easy. Every one who has lived in France has had pointed out to him the sumptuous dwelling of this or that ex-minister, who, it is said, has had no other calling or possible source of profit than politics, since the days when he perforce inhabited a very modest abode. Idle tales of this kind are not easy to verify, and might be disregarded, as well as similar stories often told with minute detail in the journals, but that their currency displays the demoralising belief that there are politicians who make fortunes out of their public functions. One of the ministers involved in the Panama affair threw some light on the conception formed by politicians of a certain type concerning their rights in this respect. When the

Ribot Ministry announced to the Chamber that two of its members, MM. Rouvier and Roche, were to be prosecuted, the former, in the course of a bold defence before a hostile House, said, "I have the consciousness of having had the affairs of this country in my hands without my fortune having abnormally increased,"[1] and the only possible interpretation of those measured words, uttered by a practised speaker at the great crisis of his life, is that he held that there is a normal point up to which a minister's private fortune may legitimately increase during his tenure of office.

The salary paid to a French minister is only £2400 a year, and in Paris, where living is dear, it is impossible for a household inhabiting one of the palaces provided for ministers to save money out of that stipend. The "normal" augmentation, therefore, of his resources which, according to M. Rouvier, is permissible to a minister of the Republic during his term of office cannot come out of his salary; and if he resign his portfolio a richer man than when he accepted it, he must have utilised his public position for his private pecuniary advantage. This need not mean either that he appropriated the money of the nation or that he accepted bribes. He may merely have turned to his own profit information acquired in the public service; but that method of gaining riches, if it be accepted as legitimate, is of even greater danger to the commonwealth than proceedings which, when detected, can be penalised as crimes. M. Rouvier was one of the most experienced ministers of the Republic, having held the portfolio of Finance in five Cabinets, one of which he presided over; but he did not

[1] Chambre des Députés: Séance du 20 Décembre, 1892.

speak for all contemporary office-bearers, many of whom reject with indignation his theory. At the same time, so current is the belief, even among Republicans, that members of Parliament, whether in or out of office, look upon politics as a lucrative profession, that, soon after the events which elicited M. Rouvier's doctrine, a Radical deputy[1] brought in a bill providing that each parliamentary candidate on the eve of the poll should submit to investigation the total value of his property, and, if elected, he should, at the expiry of his mandate, consent to a similar inquest to show that his means had not augmented during his legislative career. The project was hardly practical, but its proposal was significant.

III

We will now pass to the comments on the general question of political corruption made by spectators who represent unbiassed and intelligent French opinion, carefully avoiding the testimony of extreme partisans whether Reactionary or Socialist.

No defenders of the Republic have denied the existence of corruption in its legislature or the impunity of the offenders. It is not necessary to quote more than one of them, the most respectable champion of the Constitution and of the parliamentary system, the *Journal des Débats*. When the Chamber invalidated the election of M. Wilson, the son-in-law of President Grévy, who had reappeared on the political scene, a Radical-Socialist deputy protested that the unpunished "Panamists" were trying to make their own offences forgotten by virtuously excluding a

[1] M. Beauquier: Deputy for Besançon.

former ally, whose delinquencies were of a remoter date than theirs. The comment of the organ of the Moderate Republicans was significant. No doubt, said the *Débats*, there are a number of "Panamist" deputies in the present Chamber as corrupt as M. Wilson, but it is unjust of you Radicals to suggest that they are only to be found in the ranks of the Moderates: "If we have to revive this sad history of Panama we can prove that among the men most deeply compromised were some of the most illustrious members of the Radical party."[1]

The study of the drama is essential to an acquaintance with the political as well as the social phases of the French nation. The masterpieces of Augier, for example, portraying the members of the bourgeoisie which, having made the Revolution, considered that its work was done because they had grown rich thereby, are as instructive for the period of Louis Philippe as the memoirs of Barante or the treatises of Tocqueville.[2] In France, moreover, the drama bears a more important relation to the life of the people than in England, where the revived art of the playwright is in its infancy. In Paris the public of the theatres represents every class of the population, and the leading critics, whose weekly articles are waited for with an interest unknown in other countries, have to possess not only literary erudition and artistic instinct, but also a profound knowledge of the springs of every popular

[1] *Journal des Débats*, 27 Février, 1894.

[2] "Avec Émile Augier, Alexandre Dumas restera le témoin et le juge incorruptible de quarante années de notre histoire sociale" (A. Mézières, de l'Académie Française). This was also the opinion of M. Taine, who made the men and women of the comedies of Augier and of Dumas fils the subject of two philosophical essays on contemporary French types.—*Vie et Opinions de M. Graindorge*, xvii., xviii.

sentiment, political, moral, or social. Thus a comedy of modern life, studied together with the attitude of its audience and the comments of its critics, will sometimes give a juster insight into a subject of actual interest than all the polemics ever written upon it.

M. Sarcey, the veteran of dramatic criticism, is so celebrated for his theatrical chronicle in the *Temps* that it is sometimes forgotten that he was an uncompromising Republican polemist who fought by the side of Gambetta for the establishment of the Republic. The year after the Panama trials, a highly laudatory article of his roused public curiosity in a play entitled *L'Engrenage*, by a young writer, M. Brieux. M. Sarcey, after a minute analysis of the piece, advised his disciples to read as well as to see this "most happy essay in political comedy."[1]

The story is that of a self-made provincial manufacturer, persuaded by his wife, who wishes to live in Paris, and by a senator who wishes to utilise him, to come forward as candidate for the Chamber. Reluctantly consenting, he commences the electoral campaign with high-minded ideas of the duties of a deputy, refusing to lend himself to the practices usual in a contest, until his agents tell him that the local politicians do not want a professor of morals, but a delegate to perform their jobs. He makes his mark in the Chamber, but his business in the country suffers from his absence; and while he is realising that a brilliant politician cannot support a family in Paris on a pound a day, his friend the senator introduces a company promoter, who has in hand a scheme for piercing the Simplon, which only needs the authority of Parliament

[1] Feuilleton du *Temps*, 21 Mai, 1894.

for the raising of a few millions sterling to complete a new line of communication between France and Italy, to aid in effecting which is an act of purest patriotism. The plausible promoter, at the close of an interview with the deputy, leaves on his table, as if by accident, a cheque for a thousand pounds, at first indignantly returned, but finally taken by the wife, to whom the financier protests that it is merely a trifling offering for her works of charity. The play follows the story of the Panama scandal up to the moment when the denunciations begin, and the bribed legislators are menaced with exposure. At this point it departs from its historical model, in making the deputy refund his bribe, with a public confession and resignation of his seat, amid the unanimous execration of his political friends.

This comedy formed the theme of an interesting essay by M. Jules Lemaître on the moral standard of the political world. M. Lemaître, who has since become an Academician, his election being greatly due to his masterly dramatic criticisms, is the most philosophic critic of the day. He described the play as the "adventures of an honest man who turned politician and finally became an honest man again." He proceeded: "The work is excellent. It brings to mind clearly and vigorously things that we know, but that we never know well enough. It is too true that in a democracy, perhaps more than in other régimes, politics becomes the mistress of falsehood, of hypocrisy, and of cowardice. It is too true that, in the society in which we live, a bandit like this calm, cynical old senator is as certainly a scoundrel as that he is 'a man of average morality'; and, amid the life that we lead, with no other objects than money,

vanity, and pleasure, there are among our public men charming fellows, and even 'men of integrity,' who have been guilty of scurvy transactions, the turpitude of which they have only realised the day they were threatened in the name of abstract morality, which probably their denouncers have practised very indifferently."[1]

M. Lemaître, it will be observed, joins issue with Montesquieu on an important point. We shall have to return to his appreciations, which are, like much of his writing, perhaps too pessimistic, though they are of value as being those of one who reflects as well as guides the opinion of the most cultivated classes in France. More important, perhaps, than his analysis, or the less subjective eulogy of M. Sarcey, was the unanimously cordial reception of the piece by the Parisian public, quick to resent in the theatre political allusions displeasing to any section of it. M. Sardou had to withdraw *Thermidor* from the Théâtre Français, because there were apologists to resent reflections made on Robespierre and the butchers of 1794; but there were none to protest against this indictment of the parliamentary morals of the living representatives of the people.[2]

[1] Feuilleton du *Journal des Débats*, 20 Mai, 1894.

[2] *L'Engrenage* is a mechanical term signifying the relative disposition of cog-wheels to one another, and suggests the idea of being caught in moving machinery. There was a curious incident connected with the licensing of this play. The censor had previously refused to license one by M. Maurice Barrès on the same subject of parliamentary corruption, entitled *Une Journée Parlementaire*, though when it was afterwards produced privately at the Théâtre Libre the *Débats* described it as "a singularly sober sketch." Consequently *L'Engrenage* was refused by many managers for fear of the censor, who, however, when it was brought to him took the unusual step of asking the Minister to read it. It happened that the department of Fine Arts was then presided over by a Minister of unusually high character, M. Spuller, and he, thinking that the moral of

This recognition by the French public of the existence of parliamentary corruption leads to the gravest phase of the whole question — the indifference of an honest people to the political dishonesty of its representatives chosen by universal suffrage. M. François Coppée, though a poet, is a keen observer of the sublunary ways of his countrymen; and he, after the Panama trials, predicted that at the general election, a few months later, "The candidates released on an 'ordonnance de non-lieu,'[1] or acquitted by a jury of the Seine, will obtain the most imposing majorities; and to have met with such an accident will, in election addresses, be described as 'having been calumniated, and having suffered for the Republic.'" The prophecy was fulfilled, even without the implicated politicians being called upon to pose as martyrs, or to apologise. The Reactionaries, who in the Chamber had displayed fatuous feebleness

the play might be useful for some of his former allies, who had brought discredit on the Opportunist party, licensed its public representation; so this merciless attack on the parliamentary system was given to the world with the special imprimatur of Gambetta's chosen friend. It was produced in the summer, when fashionable Reactionaries, who sneer at institutions of the Republic, eschew theatres; and it was a curious spectacle to see the house thronged with people of the middle and humble classes, approving with their applause the sombre picture.

[1] An "ordonnance de non-lieu" to some extent corresponds to a decision of a police magistrate, in our country, that there is not enough evidence against an accused person to go to a jury, with the important difference that the proceedings which result in the "non-lieu," or in the committal to the assizes, are secret. Hence the dissatisfied suspicion aroused when most of the politicians arrested on the charge of corruption in the Panama affair were released, without the public having any information as to the influences or motives which had induced the magistrates to take that course, the French judges, though incorruptible in the ordinary sense of the word, being necessarily amenable to political influences, as they are ill-paid functionaries dependent on the good-will of politicians for their promotion.

when the public was freshly zealous for a cleansing, were not likely to be formidable in the constituencies, with the nation weary of the scandal; but their unchanging ineptitude would not, without the imperturbable apathy of the French electors, have sufficed to secure impunity for those of whom M. Coppée wrote, and in some rural districts the frugal peasants, convinced that no sane man would take the manifest trouble of seeking a seat in the Chamber except for motives of personal profit, had no sympathy with their less prudent neighbours in their indignation at the malversation of their expected gains by their parliamentary representatives.

Thus, owing to the indifference of the electors to the conduct of their representatives, a French deputy lacks a potent motive for keeping on the path of integrity. But, apart from the natural disinclination of the French population to occupy itself with politics and with matters generally which do not directly concern it, there is wanting in France the force which is most effective to make an industrious people take interest in current affairs outside the domestic horizon of thrift and toil. From time to time a revolutionary or patriotic wind passes over the land, inspiring the peaceful inhabitants with ideas which take them beyond their local surroundings, but even in such crises the minority alone is so swept along. To educate, therefore, the French electorate at normal periods, an organisation of party government would be necessary. I do not venture to say that such education would benefit any section of the population; but without the party system, with its direction of the choice of candidates and its vigilance over the public conduct of political opponents, there is no prospect of the ordinary

French elector ever waking out of his apathy with regard to matters which do not affect his private interests.

IV

The party system is probably the strongest purifying agent in parliamentary government under extended suffrage. Before further examining this proposition it will be necessary to make some preliminary observations. It would serve no useful purpose to make a comparison between the standard of political morality in France to-day and under past régimes. Some indiscreet defenders of the Republic have declared that if the Wilson scandal and the Panama affair were discreditable, political morality was as low in France under Louis Philippe and Louis Napoleon. The suggestion that under all governments, constitutional monarchy, democratic dictatorship, and parliamentary republic, corruption is the characteristic of French political life, is unpatriotic. It is true that the downfall of the Middle-class Monarchy was hastened by the condemnation of two ex-Ministers[1] who had acted on the famous recommendation of M. Guizot, "make yourselves rich," in a sense not contemplated by that pattern of personal integrity; but the governing class at that epoch was the elect of limited suffrage, and the extent of the evil was small. To it the corruption which existed under the Second Empire bore as little resemblance as to that which

[1] "Quelques faits éclatants de corruption découverts par hasard avaient persuadé à la nation que toute la classe qui gouvernait était corrompue" (Tocqueville). In 1847 M. Teste, Minister of Public Works in the Guizot ministry of 1840, and General Cubières, Minister of War in M. Thiers' ministry of the same year, were convicted for having taken bribes in connection with a mining concession.

has developed since the war. That fortunes were made by persons attached to the Government of Louis Napoleon in connection with the improvements of Paris, and that jobbery was connived at by the authorities, is probable enough. But parliamentary corruption can only exist under a parliamentary régime, and though certain ministers were believed to traffic their influence, members of the Corps Législatif were shielded from the temptation of selling their votes by the paternal arm of their Imperial master.

The most common form of political corruption in England during the nineteenth century has been the bribery of electors by candidates for Parliament; but as that offence has been almost stamped out in our country by severe legislation, and as the mild phase of it existing in France has been treated of elsewhere, there is no need to deal with it here. It is, however, interesting to inquire why the parliamentary system in England has escaped evils which now ravage political society in France under circumstances somewhat similar.

A striking result of the later progress of civilisation is the assimilation in certain respects of the moral standard of nations hitherto distinct by tradition, race, or geographical position. It is not the march of democracy but the march of civilisation which levels international distinctions. The most manifest effect of the development of rapid means of transit and communication is that they are making paramount the rule of plutocracy in the most civilised communities; and under that sway the tone and moral standard of societies are assimilated according to the civilisation which they enjoy rather than according to their race-origin or their political institutions. This is most

evident in great cities. The Spanish and the French are both of Latin race, and enjoy similar electoral franchise; but Paris has fewer ethical points of resemblance with Madrid than with London or with New York. The reason is that the capital of Spain stands outside the modern movement, while the other three cities are centres of the new civilisation, in instant communication with one another at every moment of the living day. The closeness of that connection is due to the artificial markets of the world, which have been so developed by electric inventions that the stock-exchange has become more powerful to influence the spirit of modern peoples than any religion however catholic, than any philosophy however humanitarian.

Voltaire imbued the court of Potsdam with his tenets; Montesquieu ripened his doctrines in visiting England, and thereby changed the history of France, as well as supplying material for the Constitution of the United States; Adam Smith's theories travelled abroad and begat a school of French economists. But those great international teachers filled the minds of men inhabiting diverse countries with new ideas on ethical, governmental, and commercial questions without producing a new cosmopolitian sect such as our later civilisation has given birth to. To-day the monopolists or railway kings at New York and Chicago, or the financiers, Jew and Gentile, of London and Paris have more influence in shaping the ethics of the world than all the philosophers had in the eighteenth century; and with the aid of the telegraph, which puts two hemispheres in as close communication as two adjacent streets, the financial operators of the globe form a fraternity powerful to set up and main-

tain its moral code in cities and in lands remote from one another. Our generation is not the first to have seen populations demoralised by the desire of riches, but the crises thus caused in the past were isolated and localised. The history of Law, the Scottish venturer, who manipulated the finances of France when the South Sea Bubble was taking place in England, indicates that before the United States existed, and before the Jews were emancipated, there were cosmopolitan financiers of the type familiar to-day; but it also shows that men of boundless imagination and energy then had their influence circumscribed. Nearly a century later the tidings of the Battle of Waterloo, on which the prosperity of Europe depended, was not known in England, almost within earshot of its cannonading, for forty-eight hours after its decision; and though the first news of it came to a banking-house, it caused less money to change hands in speculation than takes place in Paris on the morrow of a skirmish in South Africa, the result of which cannot have any direct and legitimate effect on the resources and politics of France.

When, therefore, in spite of this assimilating process, a different ethical code seems to regulate political life in the two nations at the head of European civilisation, it is clear that the community which escapes the evils into which the other falls must be possessed of special safeguards. We must dismiss the idea that the standard of probity, handed down from less civilised times, is higher in one of those nations than in the other. The French are a people remarkable for their honesty; and we may take it that in the two countries the honest in matters relating to money and property form the vast majority of the population. But in England as well as in France are to be found in

various walks of life men, such as M. Lemaître describes, of average integrity, who are capable of committing, or who have committed, acts of turpitude, which they decline to recognise as infringing the laws of abstract morality, until one day, by omitting some technical precaution, they find themselves charged with an indictable offence. Here is a trustee who, by bought connivance, diverts to his own profit the money of women or children left to his care; here is an offender who, by adroit menaces, compasses the suicide of an embarrassing accomplice. All who have practised the law know of the masked existence of such persons in local positions of credit, and sometimes they enter even the House of Commons. In late years two members of the British Parliament have been convicted for offences against property; one of them of the type unhappily growing in influence in all prosperous countries — the speculator who, at his best, seeks to enrich himself without increasing the wealth of the community; the other a country gentleman of the class which has produced the most respectable of English statesmen.

Thus we must recognise that in our country, as in France, honourable positions, which ought to be held only by men of probity, are sometimes filled by the dishonest and the predatory. But if such ill-disposed persons occasionally find their way into the House of Commons, how is it that their detected misdeeds never take the form of offences connected with their legislative mandate? It cannot be from any scruple on their part. A man who would plunder women or ruin scores of homes would not shrink from trafficking his vote from a sentimental respect for the high tradition of the House of Commons. The great motive power to keep wavering members on the

path of parliamentary integrity is the party system, and this is wanting in France. The annals of political corruption under the Republic clearly show that the legislators who sell their votes and commit like offences are not as a rule men who in the ordinary relations of life would misappropriate or defraud. They are usually M. Lemaître's "men of average morality," who in a great capital fall under the influence of that cosmopolitan code which, as we have seen, follows civilisation. They are of the ethical type of those who in commercial countries accept the secret commissions in trade, decried by English judges, or of those members of our legislature who, for a consideration, lend their names to the directorates of unsound companies — though it should be said that this temptation to misuse his parliamentary position less often assails a French legislator, the title of Member of Parliament not having in France an expansive effect on the credulity of investors. Such men, seeing that their colleagues sometimes augment their resources by methods which, dubious outwardly, infringe no abstract principle of morality, imitate them till insensibly they arrive at the mental condition described in the confession of the Minister who alone was punished in the Panama affair.

There is no restraining power in the French parliamentary system to arrest a member on his easy descent, and he knows that if he escape penal condemnation he will enjoy relative impunity. Many deputies are men of high integrity; but virtue in a large assembly is of small force without organisation, and moreover a group of legislators leagued together merely as a vigilance committee would have neither consistency nor durability, which the discipline of party can alone effect. Corruption of the

kind which has undermined the Republic could not co-exist with party government. A party whose ministers or supporters had incurred as much suspicion as fell on the politicians acquitted in the Panama affair would under it be swept out of existence for a period. When the first denunciations appeared, the leaders of the party to avert that fate would have said to their implicated colleagues, "In spite of your abilities and of the manifest exaggeration of these charges, we must part company, for though you may have been culpable only of indiscretion, we cannot afford to be identified with doubtful transactions"; and the Opposition, eager not to lose its vantage, would scan with equal keenness the acts of its own members. With party government the electorate would not have appeared to condone those scandals. But as it was, when a deputy involved in them went before his constituents, whose local interests he had well served, with no opponent more formidable than the nominee of some decayed or immature group, they gave their votes to the old member whose influence with the prefecture in the past had benefited the district, rather than to the new-comer whose denunciations had no authority; whereas had each electoral district been the scene of a contest between organised parties, the same spectacle would not have been presented.

While it may be presumed that the scandals which recur in the parliamentary government of France would be restrained if party organisation could be applied to it, there is no more prospect of the introduction of the party system than there is of the resurrection of the Merovingian kings. It is, however, useful to note the evils which may result from its absence as a warning to all parliaments to avoid breaking up into groups. These out-

breaks or exposures of political corruption, therefore, are a sign not that the French nation has become demoralised, but rather that it is endowed with a system of government unsuitable to its temperament, which seems to make it the accomplice of the misdeeds of its representatives, over whom, owing to the defects of the system, it has little real control. Thus corruption under the Republic constitutes another condemnation of the parliamentary system in France. That the parliamentary government under which such scandals have increased is Republican in form has not much to do with their cause. No doubt the incidents which have marked the history of the Republic since it has been governed by Republicans have most effectively gibbeted the pretension, that the name of Republic inspires with virtue the citizens under the régime bearing that name. It is not, however, the absence of a monarch but the presence of the parliamentary system which troubles France. The advantage imputed to the monarchical form of government over the republican in this respect is that a sovereign, being the tangible head of the State, is held responsible for abuses which flourish under his rule, and his crown being at stake if they continue, he might use his personal influence to check them; but this could not apply to a revived or improvised constitutional monarchy in France, as such a régime would naturally rest on the parliamentary system, which would not cast off its defects because it was presided over by a nominally irremovable sovereign. On the other hand, it is possible to conceive a form of government labelled Republican which might repress the evils. The Consulate, for example, was a Republic unburdened with parliamentary institutions, and brought into exist-

ence, on the eve of the century now ending, by the corruptions of another republican system.

Two other causes, sometimes cited as conducing to political corruption under the Republic, need not occupy our attention — democratic franchise and payment of members. The Monarchy of July, under which members were elected by limited suffrage and were unpaid, was, as we have seen, hastened to its end by parliamentary scandals which gave currency to the belief that the legislature so constituted was a corrupt body. In the ensuing half century of universal suffrage the popular vote has been inconsistent in its decisions; but parliamentary corruption seems to have been only an accidental result of its exercise during one period of its erratic history. The converse result expected by some of its doctrinaire admirers has, however, not been realised. It cannot be said that the democratic electorate has had a purifying influence on its representatives.

As to the payment of members, the opponents of the practice say that it encourages corruption in two ways. It induces parliamentary representatives to regard a political career as a source of profit, and it introduces into parliament needy men whose poverty makes them easy victims to bribery. The former is the more valid objection; but it applies more strongly to the payment of ministers, for they are remunerated much more highly than ordinary members, and, moreover, if their appetites are thus whetted for making profit out of politics, their opportunities are infinitely greater than are those of mere senators and deputies. The latter objection is the more plausible; but when any scandal has occurred under the Third Republic in which legislators have been accused of

corrupt dealings, it has not been clearly shown that those most implicated were men who had no other source of income than their salary of a pound a day. On the contrary, the deputy whose name has been most conspicuously associated with corruption in the French legislature was a very rich man from his youth, and in the subsequent Panama affair the most suspicious cases were those of senators and deputies to whom a daily stipend of twenty-five francs was not of supreme importance. It is possible that there have been indigent legislators living penuriously on their allowance, who have been tempted to add to it by corrupt means; but such cases, when they occur, may be ascribed rather to the unhealthy tone pervading political circles than to the system which seems to encourage the presence in Parliament of men without resources. If the payment of members aggravates in any wise the evil, it cannot be regarded as one of its primary causes. Members are paid in countries where venality is not imputed to politicians, and in France the practice has become part of the legislative system, accepted alike under authoritative and parliamentary régimes. It is approved of by representatives of all opinions, and the most disinterested inquirers into the origin of political corruption under the Republic have laid no stress on it.

V

There is another phase of the ethical results of the present régime in France which is often the subject of discussion. The Republicans, who used to compare Napoleon III. with Tiberius, declared that not only had his rule reproduced the political corruption of the Roman

Empire, but that under it private morals had sunk to so low a level that only the elevating influence of a republic could raise them again. The idea was sincerely cherished by some of the irreconcilables of the heroic age of republicanism, who thought that France, chastened by the tribulations of war, would find in the Republican form of government a refuge from the luxurious excesses of the Second Empire. As M. Jules Ferry said, after its tragic fall, "France, delivered from the corruptions of the Empire, has entered into the period of the austere virtues."

Though they sometimes accompany one another there is no necessary association between public corruption and a low standard of morals in private life, any more than there is between virtue, domestic or political, and the Republican form of government. As to the former proposition, M. Grévy is the most conspicuous Republican example in France of one who regarded the tenure of office as a source of personal profit; and he was such a model of domestic propriety that it was his too blind affection for his family, combined with a too zealous practice of the virtue of unluxurious thrift, which led him into public wrong-doing. That private austerity is fostered under a republic is a theory based on no historical experience since the abnormal period of Puritan rigour under the English Commonwealth; and the sole previous experiment of Republican government in France, which lasted long enough to produce a school of morals, was the Directory, under which every iniquity, public and private, was encouraged, the incarnation of the régime being Barras, whose venality was eclipsed by his profligacy.[1]

[1] The following is the testimony of one of his co-directors, La Revel-

The stern Republicans, who chafed at the decadence of private morality under the Second Empire, had not in their predictions the support of even the legends of pseudo-classicism; for in the revolutionary text-book of antiquity, the biographer of the young Anacharsis had pointed out that "Périclès autorisa la licence, Aspasie l'étendit et Alcibiade la rendit aimable."[1] It is right to say that the Third Republic has been as innocent of Aspasias as it has been destitute of the statesmanship of Pericles, or the brilliancy of Alcibiades. Neither has it reproduced modern types like Barras, which flourished under the First Republic, and were the direct offspring of the great Revolution; whence it may be inferred that the mixture of the true revolutionary stock with imperial and constitutional strains, has not been a disadvantage. There would have been no cause for expecting the standard of human conduct to be transformed by the Republic, had not the opponents of the Second Empire, seeing that it licensed abuses public and private, ascribed them to the form of government instead of to a combination of circumstances, national and international as well as dynastic, which preluded the war of 1870.

It must be allowed that in spite of history, the fiction is wide-spread beyond France and beyond the ranks of the austere denouncers of the Second Empire. Hence strangers who come from monarchical countries are

lière: "Au Luxembourg Barras n'était entouré que des chefs de l'anarchie la plus crapuleuse, d'aristocrates les plus corrompus, de femmes perdues, d'hommes ruinés, d'agioteurs, de maîtresses et de mignons. La débauche la plus échevelée se pratiquait de son aveu dans sa maison" (*Mémoires de La Révellière Lépeaux*).

[1] *Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis en Grèce*, vol. i. éd. de 1788.

unfavourably impressed with certain spectacles which meet their eye under the Republic, though they would pass unnoticed under any other régime. For example, the frequentation of the foyer-de-danse at the Opera does not in Paris imply a tendency to irregularity of life, such as habitual visits behind the scenes of theatres in other capitals might suggest. That spacious green-room is the resort of all classes of Parisians, serious as well as gay, of men of letters and of ambassadors, of artists and of fashionable idlers. But a foreigner coming to France, imbued with the notion that austerity is the badge of the earnest Republican, suffers a pang of disillusion when he recognises legislators of the Republic among the familiar frequenters of the backstairs of the opera-house, even though he be aware that in Paris a man's innocence and respectability are no more questioned if he passes an occasional half-hour in that nimble resort, than in London if he spends his evenings in the lobby of the House of Commons.

M. Garnier's gilded edifice is officially known as the National Academy of Music. It is a sub-department of the State, depending on the Ministry of Fine Arts, and the agile members of the corps-de-ballet are functionaries of the Republic. Like other public servants in France they are poorly paid, and the recognition of this fact constitutes a peril for the representatives of the nation to whom those amiable persons address their grievances. Hence it was that when the Panama scandal overshadowed France, stories were rife of this or that public man having had recourse to the funds subscribed by peasants for the piercing of the Isthmus, to supplement the official salary of a dancer who threatened

to desert her Republican protector for a rich Reactionary, whose income did not depend on services rendered to the State. There may have been isolated cases of this description, but it was not to provide for the irregular pleasures of politicians that political corruption was introduced into the Republic. To judge from the cases on which most light was thrown, the motive inducing public men to make illicit profit out of a political career has usually been a desire of consolidating a position of worldly prosperity and outward respectability.

Nevertheless, the Republic has not exercised a good influence as the public guardian of decency, compared even with the decried Imperial régime. A Republican who with his pen helped to upset it, and who later was a well-known Opportunist deputy, was constrained to make this avowal: "The famous corruption of the Empire, how innocent it would seem if put side by side with the depravity unredeemed by good-humour which has succeeded it!"[1] Tolerance of the unseemly has indeed made sensible progress since the days when under the Second Empire *Madame Bovary* was the object of a Government prosecution as an immoral publication. The indictment of Flaubert's masterpiece was ridiculous, but the fact that the Empire could undertake such a prosecution proves that the official sense of decency was less dormant than it is under the Republic. Books of the class which in those days were read by stealth, are now exposed for sale in the windows of the boulevards, and

[1] M. Henri Fouquier, for many years Republican Deputy for the Basses Alpes, in a review of the *Souvenirs du Marquis de Massa*, 1840–71 (April 30, 1897).

the word "pornographic," then only familiar to the curious in the literature of the eighteenth century, has come into common usage to connote a class of journal as unmistakably as others are designated Reactionary, or Radical, or Clerical. The illustrations of such papers, exposed for sale in the streets, are of a character which would have insured their seizure by the police under the Empire; and here the Third Republic may be charged with having sinned actively as well as passively, for there is at least one instance of its ministers having decorated with the Legion of Honour the editor of an organ of blackmail as well as of lubricity.

These are not the animadversions of Reactionary desire to asperse the Republic or of alien prudery. The foremost to deplore what is here described are Frenchmen of tried Republicanism. M. Bérenger is a Republican whose record of patriotic services is remarkable. Though a peaceful magistrate, he was wounded in the war; after which he was a deputy of the National Assembly and a Minister under M. Thiers. Since then an irremovable senator and a member of the Institute, he is one of the few French legislators whose names are associated with useful legislation, he being the author of the "Bérenger Laws" in favour of first offenders. He conceived the idea of restraining the exposure in the public streets of pictures and inscriptions, from the view of which women and children ought to be protected, and the result of his efforts was to bring down upon him a shower of contumely not experienced by any of the culprits in the Panama affair. Nor in his laudable effort did he receive any support from the Government of the Republic. Its supineness was possibly another proof of the ineptitude

of the parliamentary system, for to insure the passing of a law which excites the opposition of the mob, a strong Government is required. It is probably the fear that its career may be shortened by a month or two that restrains any ministry from courageously exercising its power of censorship in conspicuous places of Parisian entertainment. M. Sarcey has been quoted in these pages as a Republican as well as a critic. No one more tenaciously than he resented the interference of the Imperial censor. No one was ever more tolerant of the broad forms of national wit, handed down from Rabelais and Molière. Yet he, under the Third Republic, has protested week after week against the revolting language put into the mouths of performers on public scenes, which would inevitably have been erased by the censor in the prodigal days of the Empire, before M. Ferry's period of austere virtue had commenced, when the extreme of licence was thought to have been reached in the brilliant couplets which led MM. Meilhac and Halévy to seats in the French Academy. At that period, however, M. Taine was a contributor to *La Vie Parisienne.*

VI

It has been said in favour of republican licence that it is not attractive, and that proposition deserves a short examination. It is true that by a perversity which sometimes affects even well-balanced minds the same conduct which would seem of vulgar impropriety, if followed under certain circumstances, assumes under others an air of romance, even though the actors be the same. The

evolution of the First Republic into the Empire supplies samples of this phenomenon. We will not scrutinise the actions of Napoleon, for he, whether Emperor or not, was a great conqueror — all his actions, even the basest, being illumined with the glow of military glory, and the vicissitudes of Josephine too are gilded with the reflex of its rays.

But if we ponder on the career of her daughter, we may wonder what, if the First Consul had not become Emperor, would have been the place in history of Hortense Beauharnais, and if her husband, Louis Bonaparte, had never by fraternal grace been called King of Holland. The doubtful paternity of Louis Napoleon, and the certain maternity of M. de Morny, would have been unattractive scandals in a revolutionary family of loose repute, like those which the chronicles of the Directory abound in, interesting only to the curious student of the period. But Queen Hortense is a romantic figure, less material than Catherine of Russia, less tragic than Marie Stuart, yet classed in men's minds in their category; and her crown, unreal though it was, served as a halo for her gallantries. So we make the pilgrimage to Arenenberg to gaze on her features in marble, and compare the sentimental ripple of her "Partant pour la Syrie" with the fierce wave of the "Marseillaise," admiring the variety of a Revolution which provided a land with two national anthems so dissimilar.

From this instance it might be inferred that royal rank, whether the heritage of birth or of hazard, gives a glamour to irregularity, and that therefore the unattractiveness of republican licence helps to make a Republic a more salutary form of government. If the sole function

of a régime were to afford a pattern of life and morals to the people this might be so; good example is, however, a merely casual attribute of governments. But a pleasure-loving court, even if it be more graceful in its diversions than are the councillors of a republic, is more exposed to view, and should a day of retribution arrive, even its innocent pastimes are exaggerated into crimes. This was the fate of Marie Antoinette. She was no queen of hazard, but the daughter of the Cæsars, married to the chief of the dynasty which for eight centuries had ruled over the nation it had created; and when that nation arose and made the royal pair the first conspicuous victims of its grievances, even the youthful levity of the high-spirited queen, in the days of her splendour, was distorted to prove the depravity of the court, until her libellous torturers persuaded the populace that she was capable of vices which the consorts of Claudius and of Marcus Aurelius would have blushed for.

From Versailles on the eve of the fall of the Bastille to the Tuileries on the eve of the Prussian war is a long step. Between the refined prodigality of the last courtiers of the Ancient Monarchy and the audacious pranks of the Imperial revellers was all the difference that there is between the stately measures of the gavottes danced at Trianon or Bagatelle and the dishevelled rhythm with which Offenbach interpreted the spirit of the Second Empire. But between the court, which inspired Burke with his famous fancy of vice losing half its evil in losing all its grossness, and its boisterous counterfeit, which reached its zenith when Sadowa was preparing the way for Sedan, there is this point of resemblance: each was denounced as an immoral example of arbitrary govern-

ment, the extravagances of which had brought an unconniving nation into an abyss. The causes which produced the great Revolution are too complex ever to be treated incidentally; but whatever justice or injustice is contained in that appreciation of the Second Empire this much may be said. If it were true that a lax moral code was then inculcated by an arbitrary government, the nation could retain its self-respect while it looked on and regretted evils which it could not remedy. But if the sense of decency be dulled under a parliamentary Republic which has no court to set an example and no head the removal of which would affect the organism of the governmental body, the democracy itself becomes the accomplice of the evil that prevails. If M. Sarcey or M. Bérenger, or any other Republicans of equally dissimilar temperament, deplore that the licence of the streets or of popular resorts is more flagrant than under the Empire, they cannot adopt M. Ferry's apostrophe and throw the blame on a corrupt despotism, delivery from which will give power to the people to purify the land. Thus it comes to pass that however unseductive the forms moral laxity may take under a Republic, its prevalence may be of greater detriment to the nation than when displayed less repellently under a punishable régime.

For ills of this nature, which are said to be more glaring under the Third Republic than under the Second Empire, it is probable that a strong Executive would be more efficacious than the good example of highly placed persons; for respect for authority is of such a nature in France that it is by no means certain that the exemplary virtues of good rulers have any effect on the public. It would be unbecoming to refer to the intimate character and

conduct of living men, but in general terms it may be said that in their private lives and surroundings the Chiefs of the State since the War have been models of orderly propriety. M. Grévy's legitimate affections indeed were so strong that they incapacitated him from the honest performance of public duty; while his successor, M. Carnot, furnished the spectacle of domestic virtue of the highest order, not resembling that of a grasping peasant, but combined with dignified display and unsullied probity, worthy of the descendant of the Director who denounced the public and private immorality of his colleagues.[1] It cannot be said that the life and example of that excellent President produced a chastening effect on the tone of the popular ballads or the matter of the popular prints circulated and sung in the capital during his term of office, and these the republican censors of the Republic regard as the outward signs.

Whether a constitutional sovereign of M. Carnot's character would have exercised more influence in this direction is doubtful; but it may be mentioned that the two most serious pretenders to restore the Monarchy in France were men of austere regularity in their domestic relations. It is indeed worthy of remark that the Comte de Chambord, who was descended from Louis XV., and the Comte de Paris, who was descended from the Regent d'Orléans, should have put their respective forefathers to shame in rivalling one another in domestic perfection, which, though a pleasing spectacle for the peasants of Lower Austria and of Buckinghamshire, was not per-

[1] In the *Histoire du Directoire*, by M. Ludovic Sciout, there are remarkable appreciations by Carnot on the conduct and character of his co-directors, Rewbell, Barras, and La Revellière Lépeaux.

mitted to influence the French nation. Those illustrious exiles seemed in their tournament of virtue to wish to recall to the world that their common ancestor was not Henry IV., of gallant and popular memory, but St. Louis. The son of the Duc de Berry, especially, burdened with the tradition of being a Child of Miracle, modelled his life on a rule more fitted for a cloister than for a palace, a council-chamber, or a parade-ground; and in marrying a princess whose vocation was that of a Carmelite, he displayed in the circumstances of his life and death that there are heights of virtue and perfection to which it is expedient that the secular leaders of people should not attain.

Amid the evils which civilisation submits us to, it is a consolation that the wisdom of the ancients is unimpaired in its contact with the ages. Never more than now was it salutary to know that virtue is moderation, and that no man is virtuous who goes to extremes. An example of the truth of that eternal verity is given in the ending of the lives of two men, both called in the later years of the century to rule over France. The one, descended from a line of kings, refused the throne of his fathers because of scruples nurtured in an oratory, which would not thrive in the modern State when exposed to atmosphere neither dim nor mystic. So he died in exile with the renown of a bigot whose zealotry could not be pierced with sentiments of patriotism. The other, a child of the people, called to the supreme power after the defection of the last of the Kings of France, brought to his high office qualities also requiring self-denial and discipline which likewise would have been virtues in another sphere; and M. Grévy died an outcast from

office which he was deemed to have turned to base purposes. The defect of the President of the Republic was the setting of too great store on the things of this world; that of the Comte de Chambord was his exclusive attention to those of the world to come. The material virtue of thrift in the one, and the spiritual virtue of mysticism in the other were carried to such an extreme that in their respective spheres those two sons of France are held up as examples of what chiefs of a people should not be.

BOOK IV

POLITICAL PARTIES

CHAPTER I

THE GROUP SYSTEM

SINCE representative institutions were introduced in France, whatever form they have taken, the spectacle has never been witnessed of the legislature steadfastly divided into two sections, the members of each united to oppose the other by similarity of political professions. We have observed how inconvenient is the absence of this arrangement, which in England forms the basis of the party system, and how small is the prospect of its advent in France. The existence, in the English Parliament, of two parties, descended respectively from the Court and Country factions of the seventeenth century, has become so ingrained in the sentiment of the nation, that though the traditions of their origin are almost all dead, the whole population of Great Britain, as well as its representatives in the legislature, continues to divide itself into two political camps, designated by changing epithets, such as Liberal and Tory, to distinguish them. Indeed, so popular is this plan that it is probable that the majority of British electors of ripe age have from time to time given each side the benefit of their support; and with such mechanical precision is the displacement of votes anticipated, that

this process is commonly compared to the swing of a pendulum, thus showing that the system is the outcome of habit and organisation rather than of principle.

In France, since the Revolution, instead of the change of Ministries, the rise and fall of dynasties and of constitutions have reflected the varying moods of the nation.[1] At the beginning, in 1789, there was no foundation upon which to build a party system. The layers of the nation were divided horizontally into the Estates of the Realm, and not vertically as in England, where the Three Estates existed and performed functions, but neither of them ever attempted to act as a solid corporation opposed to the others. When in France the Third Estate overwhelmed the other two, there were reformers who hoped that from the Revolution would come forth a constitution which, under Louis XVI., would develop on the lines of the English model. But the parliamentarians went the way of the King; and when the constitutional monarchy had perished on the scaffold, the Republic was not composed of elements likely to produce the orderly working of party government. The early groups in the Convention had some pretence of principle in their cohesion, such as the Federalism of the Girondins; but the Mountain prevailed and the Moderates were beheaded; so then the rival sects had little else than the name of their leaders to designate

[1] An incident related by Tocqueville on the day that the Monarchy of July fell illustrates this. On his way to the Chamber on February 24, 1848, he was stopped crossing the Champs Élysées by the mob, and one of the men asked him where he was going. "Je répondis 'à la Chambre,' et j'ajoutai pour lui montrer que j'étais de l'opposition 'vive la Réforme : vous savez que le Ministère Guizot est chassé?' 'Oui, Monsieur, je le sais,' me répondit cet homme en me montrant les Tuileries, 'mais nous voulons mieux que cela.'" — *Souvenirs d'Alexis de Tocqueville*, partie 1, c. iv.

them, and thus distinguished the Dantonists followed the Hébertists to the guillotine. Had not Thermidor sent Robespierre to the same fate, that sanguinary autocrat would have treated parties and other parliamentary institutions as did five years later Bonaparte, of whom he was the civilian prototype.

A quarter of a century after the assembling of the States-General, revolutionary dictatorship was swept out of France, and when the Bourbons were restored a parliamentary constitution was first tried. Then, as the restoration of the legitimate dynasty to the throne of the decapitated king seemed to resemble the recall of the Stuarts to England after the interregnum following the execution of Charles I., the fancy was cherished that the political system of France was henceforth to follow the English model. But though the conflict between ultra-Royalists and Liberals presented a faint analogy with the early struggles of Whig and Tory in the seventeenth century, the system of groups at once made its appearance in the Lower House of Parliament, elected on a limited franchise by the class most disposed to admire the institutions of England, which it conceived had strengthened our nation to be the only one in Europe not to bow the knee to Bonaparte. Thus in 1818 we find the Chamber divided into four distinct groups — the "Ultras," who believed in divine right and passive obedience; the Ministerialists of the Centre, who were the opportunists of that day; the Doctrinaires, specially so designated, who professed to be the exponents of the pure doctrine of representative government;[1] and

[1] The term Doctrinaire came into use under the Restoration to connote the opinions of this group in Parliament, it having previously been used

the Liberals who demanded the literal fulfilment of the Charter, the constitutional basis of the Restoration.

In these artificial groupings two sections of the nation were unrepresented — the survivors of 1793, who were handing on the Jacobin traditions of the Revolution; and those soldiers of Napoleon who regarded as worse enemies than English, Russian, or Prussian, the Royalists, whose king had proclaimed to the French the downfall at Waterloo of the glories of France as "the dissipation of the satellites of the tyrant by the puissant efforts of our allies."[1] So, at the birth of parliamentary government in France, it was made manifest why it would never be perfected by its essential complement, the party system; for not only had the Revolution, unlike similar movements in England, divided the nation into several instead of into two rival camps, but even an assembly, recruited from only two of the national parties, showed the inevitable tendency to subdivide into groups. The group system had precisely the same effect on the stability of Ministries in these early days of parliamentary government under hereditary monarchy as under the Third Republic. At the end of 1818, in little more than four years (not counting the Hundred Days of the revived Empire), thirty-six changes of portfolio

only as an ecclesiastical term. In his essay on Royer-Collard, the chief of the Doctrinaires, Sainte-Beuve, thus refers to the history of the word: "Par une sorte de prédestination qui s'accusait même dans les noms, il avait fait ses premières études chez les Pères de la doctrine chrétienne, autrement dits Doctrinaires" (*Nouveaux Lundis*: 16 Février, 1863). In these pages I have sometimes used it, as it is often used in France, in a wider signification, as the epithet of French Liberals generally, who were the exponents of the doctrine of 1789. The term seems to be used by English publicists somewhat loosely, almost as an equivalent for theorist.

[1] Proclamation dated from Cateau-Cambrésis, June 22, 1815.

had taken place, and the pamphleteers of the period compared this record of about fifty months with the fifty years' reign of Louis XV., who in all his councils had only fifty-seven ministers.

When the junior branch of the Bourbons was carried by popular voice to the throne of the legitimate kings, then the analogy between the abdications of Charles X. and of James II. renewed the fancy that the history of the British Constitution was being reproduced in France with its party system. It was a vain illusion; for on the morrow of the Revolution of July, Parliament resolved itself into half-a-dozen groups, which had little connection with past political history:[1] they were not born even of the brief tradition of forty years, but came into being like their truculent predecessors of the Convention, and the milder coteries of the Restoration, to prove that any political assembly of Frenchmen must needs split up into sections.

The Second Empire was not a parliamentary régime, so there was no question of party government while it lasted. The most famous Opposition in the Corps Législatif consisted of five deputies, so it would not have been easy for it to split up into groups; but when in 1863 thirty-five deputies hostile to the Government were returned, the inevitable process began, and, arrayed in several companies, they gave battle to the Empire.[2]

[1] From 1834 to 1837 the groups in the Chamber were classed as Légitimistes, Centre droit, Centre Ministériel, Centre gauche, Gauche dynastique and Radicaux, the first and the last being the least numerous. Thureau-Dangin, *Hist. de la Monarchie de Juillet*, vol. iii. c. 4. It will be observed that the Bonapartists were not recognised as a separate group.

[2] The celebrated "Cinq" of the Opposition before 1863 were MM

Whatever the numbers of the unofficial minority, the Second Empire had one marked effect on the conception of parliamentary government in France: under it the members of the Opposition, whether Republican or Monarchical, cherished the idea that the duty of an Opposition was not to oppose a ministry in office, as that would have been futile under the Imperial constitution, but to injure, in the hope of destroying, the existing régime.

After the war the National Assembly, elected in 1871, seemed to be capable of resolving itself into two great sections; though, as one of them was Monarchical and the other Republican, they were not adapted for trying the experiment of constitutional party government. But before the Assembly had decided on the régime to be set over France, the Monarchical majority and the Republican minority had shown that they both were ill-organised collections of mutually jealous groups. The Orleanists and the Legitimists renewed the feuds of a previous generation, which the Bonapartists hoped to profit from; and when the Comte de Paris essayed an ill-starred remedy by making his submission to the heir of Charles X., the Comte de Chambord responded to his kinsman's unfilial act by embroiling the united Royalists with the white flag discarded by Louis Philippe. The princes could not have destroyed the Monarchical cause had their

Darimon, Jules Favre, Hénon, Picard, and Émile Ollivier, of whom the last eventually rallied to the Empire. MM. Thiers, Berryer, and Jules Simon, with others, were elected in 1863, and Gambetta and Jules Ferry in 1869. In a forgotten book by M. Émile Ollivier, entitled *Le 19 Janvier*, published the year before the war as a complacent apology for his adhesion to the Empire, for which, when Liberalised, he predicted a glorious and popular career, he gives an analysis of the groups of the Opposition after the elections of 1863.

followers been inspired with a spirit of unity; but the Legitimists of the National Assembly outvied the contumely of their chief for the Orleanists, and when called to nominate life-members of the Senate on its creation, they voted, as we have seen, for Republicans, to keep out their hated fellow-Monarchists.

The Republicans of the Assembly, though superior in intelligence to the Reactionaries, founding the Republic with the aid of a Monarchical majority, showed the same incapacity of cohesion. Indeed, but for the preternatural folly of the Royalists, neither the authority of M. Thiers nor the resourceful genius of Gambetta would have saved the Republic from being wrecked by the irresistible group-forming tendency of French politicians. The Extreme Left, instead of fortifying M. Thiers, when President of the Republic, against the Reactionaries, opposed him, with the result that he was displaced by Marshal MacMahon, as a Royalist Chief of the State, in May, 1873. The *coup d'état* of the Seize Mai, four years later, united all the Republican groups for a moment; but as soon as that extraneous motive for union had passed, the internecine jealousies of Republicans showed that it was not on questions of principle and of policy that Ministries would rise and fall under the Third Republic. It was natural that antagonism should exist between Liberals of the Left Centre and Radicals, or their allies the men of the Commune. But it was not the combats between the Moderates and the Extreme Left which made ministerial instability a stereotyped feature of the Third Republic after it had passed into the hands of Republicans. The groups which destroyed Gambetta and disputed his succession were composed of men who professed

his opinions; and when a like fate overtook the ablest of them, M. Jules Ferry, it was not by the victims of his anti-clerical policy that he was driven from public life, but by politicians who had favoured his intolerant measures.

In 1896 the Third Republic, having existed twenty-six years, attained an age which is double the average duration of the previous régimes established in France since the overthrow of the Monarchy in 1792.[1] During the last quarter of that period the Reactionaries who desired to change the form of government reduced themselves to insignificance. It is therefore clear that if ever the party system had to appear in the French Parliament, no time, since the Revolution, has been so favourable for its introduction. But little sign has been perceived of any tendency to govern the country by the alternate advent to office of two distinct constitutional parties. For years successive Prime Ministers had formed their ephemeral cabinets of politicians drawn from various Republican

[1] This calculation is made by reckoning as one régime the First Republic under its various phases from 1792 to the proclamation of the Empire, and by not taking into account the Hundred Days as a separate régime. In this way the seventy-eight years from August, 1792, to September, 1870, were occupied by six distinct régimes, the average duration of each being thirteen years. Thus, in round figures:—

Republic, 1792–1804	12 years
First Empire, 1804–1814	10 "
Restoration, 1814–1830	16 "
Monarchy of July, 1830–1848	18 "
Second Republic, 1848–1852	4 "
Second Empire, 1852–1870	18 "

Of course, if all the constitutions set up in France in the interval be counted, the average will be reduced by one-half, but thirteen years is a fairer average to take as the duration of régimes since the abolition of the old Monarchy.

groups, and the substitution for this system of "Concentration," as it was called, of Ministries more homogeneous in composition was spoken of as though it were the harbinger of an era of party government. But though this new arrangement gave some small semblance to a defined party rivalry between Moderates and Radicals, its effect was imperceptible in the country, while in Parliament the same anarchy prevailed.

No doubt the extinction, as a force to be reckoned with, of the Monarchists who wished to put an end to the Republic, was an opportunity for the trial of Constitutional Party Government; but mere occasion does not change nature or tradition. The political institutions of a modern state are the outcome of the temperament of its people, as developed by gradual evolution or modified by violent convulsion; and the idea of introducing the party system into the French Parliament is a chimerical dream of theorists who close their eyes to that historical truth. The only mode of dividing the nation into two parties which the French understand is the plebiscite; and parliamentarians most opposed to it cannot help showing that their only conception of the party system is a plebiscitary organisation. Republicans brought up in the school which opposed the Second Empire, who can never, in their defence of the practice of wrecking ministries, drop the tradition of that epoch that the Government of the day is the enemy, no matter what its policy, show how paramount is that conception in the French mind. M. Maret, a Radical of the old type, an antagonist of dictatorship, whether practised by Louis Napoleon or portended by Gambetta, saw in the prospect of a strong parliamentary majority, giving stability to a ministry,

the practical results of a plebiscite. "If," he said, "a majority of this quality should be found in the Chamber, what were the good of a parliament at all? The day after a general election, the ministry put in office would have nothing to do but to count its partisans once for all, and then the deputies might retire to their homes for four years. What is the use of debating and of voting if the results are settled beforehand?"[1] It is needless to expose the fallacies of this argument. The proof that this or other equally unsound conceptions of parliamentary government prevail among French politicians is that for twenty-six years the elect of universal suffrage, have shown no sign of ranging themselves into two solid parties. Admirers of the group system need have no misgivings: the parliamentary Republic will to its end display the same precariousness of ministerial existence, the same perpetual prospect of a crisis, ever keeping alive the unrestful feeling that the Republic itself, growing middle-aged, is only a provisional expedient.

The following review of political groups and parties in the French Parliament and electorate will perhaps show that if the Republic be not regarded indubitably as the permanent form of government, this is not the result of the energy or intelligence of its enemies; and that its weaknesses, which one day may make the nation glad to be rid of it, are inherent, less to the Republican form of government than to the parliamentary system.

French politicians, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, may be conveniently classed in six categories, some of them comprising several recognised groups, and each of them sloping down to an undefined border.

[1] *Radical*, November 2, 1896.

It would be impossible to arrange them in order of importance, as that changes from year to year; so the most methodical plan will be to consider them according to the traditional occupation of places in the Houses of Legislature, observed first in the Constituent Assembly of 1789,[1] passing from right to left. Thus, first will come the anti-republican Right, including all adversaries of the existing régime, whether called Royalists or Bonapartists, Conservatives or Revisionists. Next come the politicians known as Ralliés, former members of the anti-republican parties, who, for various motives, have accepted the Republic. In the third category are the Liberals, including the remnant of the old Left Centre and survivors of the Doctrinaires, as well as a large number of persons who under all régimes have a dread of overturning existing institutions. In the fourth rank are the Opportunists, a vague category, of which office-holding has been the chief characteristic. They sometimes claim the succession of the Moderates, but they also have been frequently associated with the Radicals, to the fifth class, of which the left division has of late years been occupied by the Socialists, who have attained sufficient importance to be treated separately.

Some of these groups or parties, from their actual condition, might seem unworthy of attention: one has fallen into decrepitude; of another animation has been so long suspended that life appears to be extinct; another is in-

[1] "In all the legislative assemblies, from the Constituent Assembly to the present time, the deputies who are friends of privilege have been placed on the right side, and the defenders of the rights of citizens on the left." — *Vocabulaire des mots et dénominations qui servent à faire connaître les Assemblées Législatives etc. de la Révolution Française.* Paris, 1820.

teresting no longer as an active force, but only as the repository of a tradition. If the history of France resembled that of other modern nations, it would be as needless here to treat of some of the ancient parties as it would be, in studying contemporary England and the United States, to pay attention to the Anti-Corn-Law Leaguers and the Abolitionists, or even to the Jacobites and the United Empire Loyalists. But France is the land of political surprises, where lost causes come to life again; and a party or a group discredited and almost obsolete in the closing hours of the old century may, at the dawn of the new one, be active and acclaimed. Moreover, in recognising meanwhile the consolidation of the Republic, one must, in order to understand it, study the vicissitudes of factions within and without it.

CHAPTER II

THE ROYALISTS

I

WHEN the Comte de Paris died in 1894, the most pathetic circumstance attending his death was its complete insignificance to Europe or to France. The disappearance of the Prince Imperial, for all his immaturity, was an important event, removing the hopes and fears of the partisans and adversaries of plebiscitary dictatorship. The death of the Comte de Chambord was also momentous in taking away an impotent pretender whose existence paralysed the action of the Monarchists, still a considerable minority of the electorate. The heir of Louis Philippe, whose experience was as much greater than that of the youthful Bonaparte as were his qualities superior to those of his Legitimist kinsman, died without affecting the human movement outside the circle of his mourning relatives. The series of seemingly deliberate acts whereby he reduced himself to nullity was one of the causes of the consolidation of the Republic; and certain phases of national character, pertinent to our study of contemporary France, are illustrated by the incidents of his failure to recover his heritage of the constitutional monarchy, representing the one great principle of the

Revolution which has survived a hundred years — the investiture of the middle-class with the monopoly of political power. The bringing to scorn of monarchical sentiment in the minds of the French people has been chiefly due to the folly and perversity of the Royalist party; but the destruction of that particular form of it known as Orleanism was the almost unaided work of the Comte de Paris.

If any Frenchman seemed to benefit from the afflictions of France in its year of disaster it was the aged statesman who was most active in devising means to alleviate them. M. Thiers at the close of the Empire was already chafing at his long absence from power, and when the ill-fortune of war raised him to the highest eminence in the land he had no wish to descend, even to become an all-powerful mayor of the palace of a king. His rule might have been less brief had he joined his influences to the forces then ready to bear to the throne the grandson of his old master Louis Philippe. But not foreseeing that two years was his allotted span of power, M. Thiers did his utmost to make an Orleanist restoration impossible, and one of his subtlest devices took the guise of an act of justice. Louis Napoleon, harsher to the Orleans Princes than the Third Republic has been, not only confirmed the law which banished them in 1848, but virtually confiscated their French property; and M. Thiers moved the National Assembly in 1872 to award them a compensation of two millions sterling, the acceptance of which he utilised as an implied renunciation of their dynastic pretensions. The resources of France were strained by the payment of the war indemnity to Germany; and while the Comte de Paris and his relatives had, as private citizens, a right to take the money,

in not refusing it they lost the opportunity of touching, by a royal act of generosity, the imagination of the nation, which, execrating the memory of the Second Empire and alarmed at the excesses of the Commune, was ready to hail a liberal and democratic monarchy. The share received by the Comte de Paris was not excessive; the splendid bequest of Chantilly to the Institute of France by the Duc d'Aumale was one day to prove that to increase the family store was not the ruling passion of the Orleans. Nevertheless, to his dying day the chief of the house realised how formidable a weapon was forged with this gold to be hurled in his face on every occasion.[1]

This initial blunder would have counted for little had the Comte de Paris been endowed with the dashing qualities which the French ever desire and rarely obtain in their rulers. His pacific temperament possibly accounted for his second and irreparable error. His submission in 1873 to the Comte de Chambord, then of an age which promised him a score of years to live, showed his willingness to defer his own claims to the throne. The expediency of fusing the Legitimist and Orleanist parties, which

[1] The following shows how well M. Thiers calculated the effect of the transaction on French sentiment, and how durable and exaggerated a use Republicans made of it. M. Vacquerie, an old Radical, who was already known as the author of *Antigone* when Louis Philippe was on the throne, wrote of the Pretender in 1892: "An exile, the Republic reopened the gates of France to him. France was then drained of blood and money. To tear herself from the enemy's grip she had to borrow five milliards. What was the first filial act of the Comte de Paris? it was to present a bill of fifty millions of francs." Two days after his death the following appeared in the *Lyon Républicain* and other provincial papers: "On the whole we did well to throw in the face of this grasping family the gold which might have healed many a wound. With money we got rid of both Prussians and Pretender. All the same, with this ransom we might have paid for several batteries of artillery, or men-of-war," etc., etc.

united had a majority in the representative assembly, was a reason of state sufficient to impel an inactive man to remain inert. It was not an adequate excuse for the heir of the Monarchy of July to repudiate the tradition of his family, and implying that Louis Philippe was a usurper to pose, not as the grandson of a king, but as a "Vicomte de Chambord," as was wittily remarked on the centenary of Valmy, the revolutionary victory where his grandfather won his spurs, by an Academician who had devoted his pen to the monarchical cause.[1]

In humiliating his cousin by responding to his homage with the repudiation of the tricolour,[2] the symbol of the Monarchy of July, the elder Bourbon seemed to give the Comte de Paris a lesson in filial piety. The childless man made the white flag a pretext. He would not disturb his semi-monastic life merely to secure the succession for the descendants of the kinsman who usurped his grandfather's

[1] M. Hervé, *Soleil*, October 4, 1892.

[2] Certain Orleanists declare that the white flag was a late invention of Louis XIV., who made it the royal standard about 1661, and that the Comte de Chambord in declaring that "Henri V. would not abandon the colours of Henri IV.," had a false notion of the history of his family insignia. They call attention to a famous picture by Rubens in the Louvre representing Henri IV. with Marie de Médicis, wherein the royal standard is represented as "bleu semé de fleurs de lys d'or"; this being corroborated by the "*portulans*" preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the old map books of mariners in which French possessions were designated by the blue flag. Although the Orleans family has no legitimate blood of Louis XIV. in its veins, this was probably not the reason why Louis Philippe took every occasion of repudiating the white colours. M. de Barante relates that in 1845 the King told him that being in England in 1802 he was at a review to which "Monsieur," afterwards Louis XVIII., came wearing the white cockade, and on being asked why he did not also sport those colours, he told his cousin that nothing would ever induce him to wear the "livery of the émigrés" (*Souvenirs du Baron de Barante*, I.). A form of the tricolour was in use under the old Monarchy as the ensign of the "maison du roi."

crown and outraged his mother. It was in vain that the Comte de Paris further humbled himself before his obsolete relative by undutifully docking the respectable name of Louis Philippe, which he had received from the Citizen King of the French. When as Philippe VII. he succeeded Henri V. in the fifty-fourth year of that monarch's reign (Charles X. having abdicated in 1830), at the obsequies of his predecessor at Goritz some obscure foreign Bourbons were told to pass before the new King of France and Navarre.[1]

The Comte de Paris thus accepted the support of the Legitimists, whatever it was worth, aware of their reservation that the authors of his existence were the most despicable of human beings. I used often to see in his last days, the head of a family eminent before the Revolution, who had been the playmate of the Duc de Bordeaux, as the Child of Miracle was called in his infancy; and this venerable gentleman, who, after 1883, looked upon the Comte de Paris as his king, being punctilious in his visits to the exile of Stowe and referring to him with the courtly deference of the Old Régime, if ever his sovereign's parentage were alluded to would exclaim, "Mais Louis Philippe fut un gredin comme son père." The Comte de Paris knew that his Legitimist friends regarded his grandfather's action in 1830 as a crime as dark as that of Philippe Égalité on the winter's night of 1793, when amid the silence of the Convention he prefaced his vote for the King's death with grim hypocrisies about duty and con-

[1] In the *Almanach de Gotha* of the years preceding the submission of the Comte de Paris his name was printed "*Louis-Philippe* Albert d'Orléans," with the first two names italicised. After the pilgrimage to Frohsdorf "Louis" was unitalicised.

viction. No doubt that view is logical; for if divine right be admitted, the guilt of a person who by his vote took the three hundred and eighty-seventh part in the responsibility for the death of a king without benefiting from the regicide, is of less degree than that of one who, having abetted the deposition of a monarch, is the chief to profit from it by usurping his throne. In England we appreciate such transactions differently perhaps because we are not a logical people; and in our Book of Common Prayer — admirable monument of the salutary inconsistency of our nation — forty years ago we used publicly to express penitence for cutting off the head of Charles I., and jubilation for discrowning the head of his son. But we have lived and prospered for two centuries under an Orleanist Monarchy, as was observed by M. Guizot and the Liberals, who thought, by finding far-fetched analogies between the English and the French Revolutions, to perpetuate the dynasty of 1830.

One need not have an Englishman's leanings towards statutory monarchy to be amazed that any prince of the House of Orleans should repudiate that notable epoch. It is the fragment of the century which Frenchmen can look back upon with most satisfaction. Inglorious it may have been in the eyes of the veterans of the "Grande Armée," whose emotion at the second burial of the Emperor in the Invalides spread till Louis Bonaparte was summoned to revive the glories of France with cannonadings, which began in the streets of Paris and ended at Sedan. But the glories of the reign of Louis Philippe were more durable than those of victories.

The nation was prosperous, and the acquisition of wealth was encouraged; but its mere possession did not

alone confer rank under Louis Philippe as it does under the Third Republic, and as it will under any restored form of Monarchy or Empire. The salon, which the plutocracy has helped the Republic to destroy, survived, and the constitutional phase of the Revolution was a golden season of art and letters. In the French Academy, for the first and only time since Louis XIII. issued to Cardinal Richelieu the patent for its foundation, half the chairs were filled by famous men. Just fifty years ago what an illustrious company the reign, soon suddenly to expire, had gathered under the dome of the Palais Mazarin — Mignet, Scribe, Molé, Guizot, Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, Villemain, Barante, Alfred de Vigny, Thiers, Tocqueville, Mérimée, Sainte-Beuve, Pasquier, Cousin, Lamartine, and half-a-dozen others whose merit, though less resounding, would give them to-day a high place in European letters. Of future members of that company Sandeau, Augier, and Ponsard had scored their first successes in the drama; Alfred de Musset had produced his most perfect work; Lacordaire, Dupanloup, and Montalembert in the mystic sciences, Berryer in eloquence, Jules Janin and Nisard in criticism, were all at various stages of their fame. But there were other brilliant names, never to be inscribed on the roll of the Institute, which would have made the renown of a less favoured time. George Sand proved for once that the sex excluded from academies could be inspired with genius; Dumas had immortalised his Mousquetaires, Balzac had finished his Human Comedy, Théophile Gautier was emblazoning the pages of the romantic school; the ballads of Béranger, the essays of Lamennais, the histories of Thierry and of Michelet were displaying the infinite variety of the epoch.

It has been said in criticism of the constitution of the Académie Française that supposing all the worthiest were elected to that body, in no country and at no period could forty living names of the first rank in letters be found; but even though this were true of the age of Louis XIV. and of its wondrous successor, after the lapse of half a century, which tests the value of literature, it seems as though the reign of Louis Philippe had that exceptional quality.

If this were the place to eulogise the Monarchy of July, the genius of its painters would have to be lauded when Corot translated to canvas the poetry of the landscape, and Ingres ennobled for posterity the features of his contemporaries. Scientific discovery and industrial enterprise would also call for praise. But my disposition, far from being borne to extol the parliamentary monarchy, would rather criticise it as unsuited to the nation which it was set over, as the brevity of its duration showed. The talent which France brought forth under Louis Philippe was not the produce of the Revolution of July and of its improved parliamentary system; it was part of the wonderful renaissance which had begun under the Restoration, after the barren years of turmoil and glory succeeding the great change of things; and many of the names which illustrated the epoch were those of opponents of the dynasty who hastened its downfall. My intention in adverting to the lustre of the reign is to point out how insensate was the ingratitude of the Comte de Paris in professing to ignore it. Disdaining the respectable name associated with that era of art, letters, science, and industry he would not be a Louis-Philippe II.[1] But as in the Middle Ages,

[1] A testimony may be seen in France at the end of the century that

when France was a strip of Gaul straitened by the domains of Brittany, Burgundy, Provence, and England, the first of the Valois kings had made the name of Philippe the sign of defeat and oppression, the Comte de Paris would fain have become Philippe VII., the successor of Philippe VI., who lost the Battle of Créçy and established the gabelle, the salt-tax, which remained an odious heritage till it helped to end the old Monarchy.

Though such considerations had little to do with the small place which the Comte de Paris had in the affections of the French people, the possession of a character capable of impelling such conduct explains how this chief of the Orleans family killed Orleanism. So little trace of it remains in the land that it is not easy to realise how popular it was in the last years of the Second Empire, when, the Napoleonic legend being no longer revivified by military success, Orleanists and Republicans were regarded with growing favour as the champions of constitutional government who one day might overturn the existing régime. We have seen how after its fall the Republicans lost their share of popularity, owing to Gambetta's efforts to continue the war, followed by the excesses of the Commune; and had the Comte de Paris not deliberately set to work to squander the inheritance, neither the intrigues of M. Thiers nor the rusty pretensions of the Legitimists would have hindered him from becoming King of the

Louis-Philippe intended his grandson to retain the name of "Louis-Philippe." The crown-pieces of the Monarchy of July, struck in 1838, the year of the birth of the Comte de Paris, are still in circulation, and the King is described upon them as Louis-Philippe I., showing that when the first-born of the Duc (Ferdinand) d'Orléans was called Louis-Philippe, his parents and grandparents intended him to be known as Louis-Philippe II.

French. How long the Orleanist restoration would have lasted is another question.

Certain defenders of the Comte de Paris say that the line of conduct which he took was marked out for him by the fact that he was next in succession to the Comte de Chambord as legitimate King of France. An old Royalist who takes this view, if any one expresses a doubt on it, goes to his library shelf and with the *Almanach Royal* of 1788 confounds the doubter, for there on the first yellowing page, after the Dauphin, born of Louis and of Marie-Antoinette-Josephe-Jeanne, after "Monsieur" and the Comte d'Artois with his children, and after the sister and the aunts of the King, comes the Orleans branch with Louis-Philippe-Joseph (whose surname of Égalité[1] was not yet official) as First Prince of the Blood. Now the Royalist gentlemen who display this proof profess the doctrine of divine right; yet all that their old calendar records is, that up to the Revolution, the succession to the Crown in the main line being well established, there was no reason for upsetting an arrangement made by Louis XIV. whereby the descendants of his younger grandson occupied the throne of Spain, having renounced

[1] "Égalité" was not a mere sobriquet of the Duc d'Orléans. When after the downfall of the Monarchy in 1792 he became a candidate of the "Mountain" for the Convention, he discovered that he had no surname, that of Orléans falling under the decree of the Constituent Assembly which abolished territorial appellations. He was therefore directed to proceed as though he were a foundling, and to apply to the municipality of his domicile to give him a name, and the Commune of Paris assigned to him that of "Égalité," so as Louis-Philippe-Joseph Égalité he was elected deputy for Paris. The Royal Family of France had no family surname, and the Convention, in calling the King "Louis Capet," committed as great an inaccuracy as if the name of Plantagenet were applied to members of the House of Hanover.

their rights to that of France. But it is of the essence of divine right that it cannot be abrogated by human action; and to invest the dynastic transactions of Louis XIV. with that attribute is the very negation of the principle, making it depend on the capricious expression of personal will. Louis XIV. in his reign of seventy-two years had more reason than any other member of the human race to believe himself endowed with god-like qualities,[1] but their recognition after his death would have changed the whole basis of divine right. If he accepted, under the will of Charles II. of Spain, the Spanish crown for his grandson Philippe on condition that he renounced his French rights of succession, he likewise restored them to him by letters patent, and one transaction was as valid as the other. The fanatics of divine right unmutilated by Louis XIV., who call themselves Blancs d'Espagne, regarding Don Carlos as king under the title of Charles XI., have no more importance in France than in England have the

[1] There was no subject on which Louis XIV. was more arbitrary than that of Divine Right. After making war on England to support it in the person of James II. he withdrew it from his discrowned guest, when by the Treaty of Ryswick he recognised the right to the British throne of William of Orange, who incarnated the opposite principle, and almost his last act was by the Treaty of Utrecht to recognise in the same way the Hanoverian succession. In his own realm he perpetually made equally light of the doctrine, and, in addition to his contradictory policy regarding the renunciation of Philippe V., in his last days, after losing one after another of his progeny, he placed in the legitimate succession the bastards he had had by Mme. de Montespan — the Duc du Maine, and the Comte de Toulouse. Louis XVIII. was ill-disposed to concede the rank of Royal Highness to the Duc d'Orléans, and while his wife, being daughter of the King of Naples, was received at Court with royal honours, the doors of the palace being thrown open *à deux battants* for her, they were half closed again for Louis Philippe as he followed her in. He was only recognised as a Royal Highness at the same time as the Prince de Condé by the favour of Charles X., whose throne he usurped five years later.

Jacobites who speak of the Queen as the Duchess of Coburg; but on their own mildewed ground they seem to have more historical reason than the new Legitimists who aver that the divine succession devolved on Philippe VII. when Henri V. died in 1883. It would be needless to disturb the dust of this vain controversy but that the adoption by the Comte de Paris of the theory destroyed Orleanism, and thus possibly altered the history of France.

It is not to renunciations or other family arrangements made under Louis XIV. that the princes of the House of Orleans have owed their prestige in the nineteenth century. It is to the barricades of 1830, behind which Louis Philippe put on the crown of his dethroned cousin, that the sons of the citizen-monarch were indebted for the consideration which attaches to the children of a king.[1] Without the Monarchy of July the descendants of the Regent would have been ranked with the scores of Bourbons of Spain, of the two Sicilies or of Parma, whose unknown names fill unheeded pages of the *Almanach de Gotha*, and when the Comte de Chambord's death aroused the controversy of succession to a non-existent crown, the claims of the Orleans would have excited no more interest than those of the pretenders who style themselves respectively Dukes of Madrid and of Anjou.

In the declining days of the century three noble old

[1] *Cf.* the terms of the will of the Duchesse d'Orléans, dated Eisenach, January 1, 1855, in which she says: "They (her sons) should ever bear in mind the political principles which have made the glory of their house, which their grandfather faithfully observed upon the throne, and which their father, as his will bears witness, ardently adopted." The Comte de Paris was sixteen when his mother made this will, which was no doubt thus emphatically worded in consequence of the efforts, which she strongly disapproved, made, after the death of Louis Philippe, for fusing the interests of the two exiled branches of the Bourbons.

men have been conspicuous figures in the French capital. The eldest of the royal brothers, the Duc de Nemours, was of striking likeness to his great ancestor Henri IV., as Rubens portrayed the Béarnais. The second, who has survived the others, the Prince de Joinville, less often seen in public by reason of infirmity, has becomingly occupied his retirement in writing a vivacious tribute to the brilliant reign of his father which the younger Orleans would ignore. But it is the third of these sons of Louis Philippe who has been the worthiest incarnation of the Monarchy of July. The Duc d'Aumale to a stately presence joined graceful talents, making him in his old age the most interesting and picturesque of the sons of France, whose highest traditions of arms and of letters he signally dignified, ever since his capture, as a valiant boy, of the Smala of Abd-el-Kader hastened the conquest of Algeria, to the autumn of his life when he endowed with the palace of the Condés the Institute he had long adorned. Of him Legitimists never dared to hint, as they did of one venerable brother, that he was disposed to deny his father's kingship, which gave him early scope to display his parts. It is vain to regret that the heir of Louis Philippe was not this gallant and gifted prince; yet one may picture the destiny of France had the fortunes and honour of the Orleans family been in the hands of one who combined all the qualities which touch the sympathies of the conflicting elements of the nation. The man of culture would have appealed to the literary and artistic instinct wide-spread among the French people. The heir of the Revolution of July would have rallied the solid middle-class. The descendant of Henri of Navarre would have conciliated the Royalists. But the quality to have

touched the hearts and imaginations of the people was that of the soldier, the dashing horseman of Horace Vernet's paintings, the graver warrior who directed the trial of Bazaine, confounding the excuses of the faithless Marshal with a phrase that rang out like a trumpet-call to duty and patriotism, "Il restait la France."

It was because of the character of the Duc d'Aumale, and of the lustre he shed on the family of Orleans that the alliance of the Comte de Paris with the Boulangists brought down upon that hapless prince censure sterner than is usually applied to mere ill-success. When the Republicans struck from the Army List the names of the Orleans Princes, General Boulanger was their Minister to execute the decree, applying it to the Duc d'Aumale with ostentation unseemly in an officer who to his protection had owed early promotion. When therefore the hero invented of the Radicals became the leader and the hope of the Reactionaries, the Comte de Paris' alliance with him was condemned in terms that revived the saying, now passed into a proverb, that worse than a crime it was a blunder — words first applied to the outrage committed by Bonaparte to help him to a throne, when he entrapped and murdered a kinsman of the Orleans, the young Duc d'Enghien.[1] It was not merely disappointed Royalists who thus vented their wrath on their unsuccessful chief, nor Republicans happy to add discredit to the discomfited monarchical cause. Foreigners censured his conduct with equal severity. An ambassador who arrived in

[1] March 20, 1804. "C'est pis qu'un crime, c'est une faute." These words are attributed by M. de Barante to Boulay (de la Meurthe), a moderate Republican of the Revolution, who subsequently aided Napoleon in the preparation of the Code.

Paris when the Boulangist movement was ended once spoke to me of "the baseness of the Comte de Paris" in connecting himself with it. The harshness of that expression in the lips of one not given to harsh language was perhaps explained by his friendship for the Duc d'Aumale, but it was, I think, unjustified.

Had General Boulanger become dictator of France, and had he in that capacity put the Comte de Paris on the throne, the utilisation by that Prince of the services of an adventurer (who in success would have lost that title) would not have been imputed to him as base or contemptible. On the contrary, the Comte de Paris' refusal of his aid, because of his former insolence to the House of Orleans, would have then exposed him to the scorn which inopportune quixotism provokes. Mild, indeed, was his disloyalty to his family compared with that of Louis XVIII. to his, whose first act, on regaining the throne, was to call to his intimate council Fouché, the regicide who had most fiercely demanded the head of his brother. In a land of revolution pretenders cannot be dainty in the choice of their instruments; but to ward off criticism, success is essential to their venture. The crime and the blunder of the Comte de Paris were that he attached himself to an enterprise which failed, and if his belief in its success proved him to be a prince of feeble judgment, unworthy of a ruler, he shared the unforeseeing fault not only with the majority of the people he would have governed, but with foreigners, who were the most competent to prognosticate. Had the ambassador, just now mentioned, been then in France, he, being a person of uncommon sagacity, might have predicted the failure of the Boulangist movement; but he would have had only one

colleague in Paris to support him, for it is said that of all the envoys accredited to the Republic one alone advised his Government in that sense.[1] The signs which deceived calm diplomatists, studying the agitation under their eyes, might well delude an ill-fated exile, offspring and victim of revolutions, persuading him that one was at hand to divert his destiny, when his adhesion to the adventure was followed by its acclamation by the voice of the capital, which decrees the term and the nature of régimes in France.

It was a curious fate for this ill-starred pretender, that whether he deemed himself the heir of the Ancient Monarchy or of the parliamentary throne of Louis Philippe, his last struggle for success should have been in a plebiscitary adventure conducted by an aspirant to military dictatorship. But the misfortune of the Comte de Paris was that the vicissitudes of his life perpetually kept him in spheres of action inappropriate to his character and

[1] The one Ambassador to the Republic, who confidently predicted to his Government the failure of the Boulangist adventure, gave a cynical explanation of his foresight. It was his habit, he said, to use a Parisian club of which the French members were all Reactionaries, because he found their conversation useful to him in composing his despatches, as, in order to warn his Government of what was likely to happen in France, he had only to write in the opposite sense the opinions and forecasts on public affairs expressed at that resort. At the height of the agitation he was tempted to foretell its ultimate success when the Boulangists, after winning provincial elections, triumphantly carried one in Paris; but on returning to the club and finding the members confident that the end of the Republic was near he resisted outside signs, and adhering to his rule, advised his Imperial Master that the movement would inevitably fail. The story, with its evident exaggeration, is significant of the impatient contempt felt by the representatives of the continental Empires towards the French Reactionaries, to whose unintelligence they attribute the continuance in France of a form of government which their august sovereigns would prefer to see removed from Europe.

disposition. He had none of the qualities essential for a crowned ruler of France after a century of revolution; but his domestic virtues, his hereditary Teutonic temperament, his interest in social questions, and his love of rural pursuits would have made him an admirable King of England. In all the histories of the grandeur and decadence of royal houses few experiences have been more pathetic than that of this unhappy Prince, whose parts would have adorned the most exalted station in a land where the crown is transmitted in peaceful succession, wasting his life in exile and in intrigue, in transactions and in manifestoes which, abhorrent to his own nature, repelled those most in sympathy with it. Thus this pattern of paternal duty in private life was to the public the unfilial flouter of his father's will; the studious man of books became the confederate of a soldier of fortune; and the heir of constitutional monarchy, who young was the victim of plebiscitary despotism, died worn out with abortive efforts to make a *coup d'état*.

II

The sentiment called forth by the name and figure of the Comte de Paris' son is not that of pathos. The Duc d'Orléans seems to have inherited none of his father's qualities save his incapacity to touch the imagination of the people of France. When, breaking the law of exile, he appeared one day in Paris, and demanded as a French citizen to perform his military service, the public remained unmoved, either when he was sent to prison, or when pardoned he was conducted to the frontier.[1] Since

[1] February–June, 1890.

then, when Republican scandals might have wrecked the Republic, had any alternative form of government seemed practicable, the existence of a young pretender in the flower of his age has inspired neither hope nor alarm. This amiable Prince, having failed in a well-conceived adventure, has cultivated a talent for travesty. The Comte de Paris only half-heartedly repudiated his father's last wishes; if in memory of his submission at Frohsdorf he ordered centenary masses for the repose of Louis XVI., he, four months earlier, celebrated the anniversary of Valmy, where Louis Philippe as a boy had helped to consummate the dethronement of that King. But unheeding the dying injunction of the last Duc d'Orléans to his progeny to be "passionate servants of the Revolution," his namesake, in the intervals of his modern diversions, mimics the Ancient Monarchy. On the betrothal of a Prince of Savoy with his sister, a Princess whose beauty and romantic story inspired universal sympathy, the Duc d'Orléans announced it to the Dukes of France in antique phrase, addressing each as his "dear cousin," and praying God to guard him in his holy and worthy keeping.[1] The document gratified

[1] "Et sur ce, je prie Dieu, qu'il vous ait, mon Cousin, en Sa sancte et digne garde. Philippe, Stowe House, 26 Mars, 1895." It was the same formula which Prince François de Bourbon had used recently in writing to the Duc d'Orléans to rebuke him for using the arms of France without the adjunct which heraldry prescribes for younger branches. There are, however, revolutionary precedents for its use. Napoleon when he disgraced Fouché, in a letter dated July 1, 1810, beginning "Monsieur le Duc d'Otrante, vos services ne peuvent plus m'être agréables" ended with a modernised version of it. Louis Napoleon also, but not before he attained the throne, had a great fondness for epistolary formulas of the old Monarchy, which he made of evil omen, as the last missive ever penned by him as Emperor of the French followed one of these ancient models, when at Sedan he announced his surrender to the King of Prussia.

several respectable persons, who sometimes perplex coachmen by bidding them drive to the "Place Louis XV.," when they wish to be taken to the historical site now known as the Place de la Concorde; it likewise affronted other Legitimists not honoured with it, who considered their nobility purer than that of some of the bearers of ducal titles. But a pretender capable of conceiving that the union of the grandson of Victor Emmanuel, who chased the Bourbons out of Italy, with the great-grandchild of Louis Philippe, who drove the elder Bourbons from France, was an appropriate occasion for playing at reviving the ducal order with the courtly formulas of Louis XIV., the ancestor of those dispossessed princes, is wanting in that quality which the French call *esprit*, and which they will certainly look for in the ruler of their choice, when the day comes for them to submit to one.

It might be said that the Duc d'Orléans masquerading in the trappings of the Grand Monarque, has not brought greater ridicule on his name than did Louis Bonaparte on his when he descended on Boulogne with his tame eagle, likewise the symbol of a great monarch, and that he, notwithstanding the laughter of Europe excited by it, was the absolute ruler of the nation a dozen years later. But there is this difference between the acts of the two pretenders. The forlorn bird of Boulogne was the emblem of the democratic glories of France, still fresh in the memories of veterans who had imbued with them the young generation, born amid the echoes of the cannon of the Empire; thus two months after the incarceration of Louis Bonaparte for his escapade, the arrival of the Emperor's ashes from

St. Helena[1] provoked a recrudescence of the Napoleonic legend, which bore the prisoner of Ham first to the Élysée and then to the Tuileries. Whereas the spectacle of an Orleans playing at a king of the old Monarchy suggests nothing pleasing to the popular fancy. Not that it evokes the rebuilding of the Bastille, or the revival of privilege; but it has a sham air of the Restoration, a régime which, though needful for the recuperation of France, rests contemned in public memory as one begun under foreign, and ended under ecclesiastical, domination.

No doubt the Comte de Paris made the part of pretender a difficult heritage for his son to hold, and the most sagacious adherent of monarchy would be at a loss to advise him what to do to advance the cause. It may be that, convinced that he will never bear the burden of a real crown, he likes in a mock court to revive ceremonial as obsolete as the touching of children for King's Evil,[2] and as little calculated to win the sympathy of a modern democracy. If he had serious designs the young Prince would strive to belie the impolite sarcasms of Republicans who deride the choice of his counsellors from France as better qualified to advise him on the tendencies of English tailors than of French electors. It is not believed that subtle plots are concealed under the announcement that a button engraved with the arms of France has been designed for the coats of his courtiers, who do duty in the Œil-de-Bœuf of an inn at Brussels or at Folkestone with greater elegance than

[1] August–October–December, 1840.

[2] One of the acts conducing to the unpopularity of Charles X. was his revival of this ceremony at the Hospital of St. Marcoul at Reims on May 31, 1825, after his coronation.

the retainers of the exiled kings whom Candide met in the hostelry at Venice. It is less disturbing for France that the retinue of the Duc d'Orléans is not composed of desperate persons who aspire to be held up to infamy by a new Victor Hugo, like M. Fialin Persigny who attended Louis Bonaparte to Boulogne, or like

Morny, Maupas le Grec, St. Arnaud le Chacal.[1]

A frequent fate of pretenders is that they have to take as associates the unprincipled or the insignificant; but the Duc d'Orléans ought not to emphasise the latter disability as, apart from dim dynastic projects, he is the head of a family famed for the intellectual gifts of its members, which hitherto they have signally cultivated amid every sort of vicissitude.

III

In contrast to members of the decorative society of the capital are the Royalists of less brilliant aspect, but of more interesting character, also seen at the receptions held by the pretender on a foreign shore. These are the country gentlemen, whose clothes of French provincial cut, scanned with pity by the Parisian exponents of London fashions, proclaim the *hobereaux*,[2] who in their distant châteaux preserve a faith in the kingly principle, of an ardour and sincerity found in no other political creed in their native land. It has been said that in

[1] *Les Châtiments*, livre 5.

[2] *Hobereau* is a word for which we have no equivalent in English: in the eighteenth century it denoted the *petits seigneurs* who never went to court, and to-day it is applied to the rural gentry who do not frequent the capital.

France profession rather than birth makes the most marked distinction between men.[1] The observant functionary who noted the fact had specially in his mind the disappearance of local characteristic, but the remark is equally true applied to the social origin of Frenchmen. Of these two sections of French Royalists, the men of fashion are usually idlers by profession, and the pursuit of the pleasures of the boulevard, or their efforts to imitate English sporting habits, have produced a type which is perhaps the most unsatisfactory result of modern French civilisation ; so that whether the bearers of titles ancient or modern, authentic or dubious, whether descended from courtiers of Versailles or from shopkeepers of Paris, from soldiers of the Empire or from lawyers of the Revolution, they are all of identical pattern, physically, morally, and intellectually.

In the same way the Royalist rural gentry resemble one another. Here is one of noblest descent whose parchments in his remote château in Poitou record that the King invited his ancestor to mount in the royal carriage one day at Marly ten years before ducal rank was conferred on the family of the Parisian gentleman-in-waiting, who looks of a different race, and who has no attribute, exterior or mental, to distinguish him from his colleague, whose father made a fortune in trade under the Second Empire. The Poitevin agriculturist, however, has his characteristics reproduced in his neighbour from the Berry, whose name of noble sonority hides the patronymic of a notary who slipped into possession of his patron's lands at the emigration. It is to be remarked that the

[1] *La France Provinciale* par René Millet (subsequently Minister of France in Sweden and Resident at Tunis).

mere fact of a French country gentleman bearing unostentatiously a high-sounding title in an old-fashioned manor, where he lives with peasant-like simplicity, is not of necessity proof that he is a son of the crusaders, or is even of eighteenth century nobility. There is many a weather-beaten château wherein the combination of rustic discomfort and faded good-breeding gives the impression that the masters are relics of an ancient caste, fallen into decay in a democratic age. Yet on inquiry it will be found, sometimes even in regions of aristocratic tradition, that these mouldering guardians of the prejudices of the old régime are of Revolutionary origin, descended from a regicide of the Convention, or from an obscurer provincial Jacobin, who perhaps got his share of confiscated lands for the aid he gave to Carrier in drowning the Royalists yonder at Nantes, or for his services on the infernal column of Westermann, which scoured the loyal Vendée with rapine.

The curious feature of these *hobereaux* who disguise their origin under territorial names or irregular titles is the sincerity of their Royalist professions. They cannot be compared to our newly made peers, who prevail on editors of peerages to erase from their pedigrees the worthy aldermen who founded their fortunes, and to accord them forefathers who performed feats at Hastings unknown to the workers of the Bayeux tapestry; for these invent a romantic ancestry in the pretentious hope of enhancing their public importance. Such motives can little affect these modest nobles of the Revolution. If the title or name secure better dowered marriages for their sons, within the provincial horizon in which they move and wish to be well considered, their history is well

known to their neighbours of longer genealogy. Some of them, it is certain, have an unfeigned horror of their landed origin; and their dogged royalism, which often is a material disadvantage under the Republic, is in a measure an expiatory sacrifice for their tainted heritage of 1793.[1]

Other loyal gentlemen there are, though dissimilar to the ornate Parisians whom they meet in the train of the pretender, whose lineage is veritably ancient, and who pass their home life in an atmosphere of refinement which retains a perfume of old France chastened with the tribulations of a century. Here is one of those rare châteaux in which life has gone on without interruption from before the Revolution; for though remote from the Court, where the head of the family had a high place, it was never entirely deserted for Versailles, and at the second Emigration the devotion of a retainer saved it from confiscation. Since the Restoration the women of the house have handed down the tradition of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, witnesses of the austere life of her who, like some of themselves, had grown prematurely old in ill-timed girlhood under the shadow of the guillotine: inheriting, too, the masculinity of that illustrious Princess, and provoking an echo applied to themselves of Napoleon's description of her, that she was the only man of her family. A Puritan seriousness marks the daily round in this Catholic châ-

[1] In a Revolutionary family of this description which came under my notice, the inhabitants of the château, which their ancestor had got possession of as "biens nationaux," were a mother and daughter, both aged women. The origin of their property was to them a perpetual penance, and they spent their lives in works of expiation. They built a costly church in their village, and their château was devoted to the uses of the Bishop of the Diocese, who made it his summer residence.

teau, and in the spacious old hôtel of the provincial capital during the winter months; for the family have abandoned Paris since the death before Metz of the only son. Although the master of the house has accepted the Orleans succession, there are few traces of that branch of the Bourbons to be seen within these walls which shelter many royal relics. Enshrined in the chapel is the Book of Hours of Marie Antoinette; among engravings of eighteenth century portraits after Rigaud and Vanloo is a later print representing the birth of the Child of Miracle in 1820; and with the family pictures is the painting of a boy in brilliant uniform, one of the infant grenadiers commanded by the young Duc de Bordeaux, when his grandfather Charles X. occupied the throne till his cousin of Orleans displaced him. But the signed photographs of Philippe Comte de Paris and of his heir have not the conspicuous place here which they occupy in the salons of fashionable Reactionaries at Paris. There is an aged lady who, despite her quality of dowager, still reigns in this household, and the sorest grief of her life, greater than the death of her soldier grandson at Gravelotte, for that was full of honour, was his father's resolve to acknowledge the Orleans branch. When he travels abroad to pay his respects to the pretender, she affects to believe him gone to see his notary; and the *Gazette de France*, which records the pilgrimage, she has refused to read ever since that venerable Legitimist organ became Orleanist. When the Duchesse de Berry was being hunted like a partridge on the hills by the agents of Louis Philippe, she was growing up in the Faubourg St. Germain, now only a geographical expression, but then the sanctuary of aris-

tocratic exclusiveness, whereof few traces remain in any section of Parisian society. There she learned to hate Orleanism as the blackest phase of the Revolution, and took a husband older than herself whose first infant memory was his father's farewell embrace as he went to be beheaded. To justify her vehemence towards the Orleans family she preserves a manuscript book, her mother's journal at Coblentz, of the year 1793, and the childish round hand, amid notes of lessons and of nursery pastime, records, with precocious pathos, the news of horrors which the émigrés received circuitously from France, beginning with the execution of the King and ending with reflections on the death, on the same scaffold, of the basest of his judges, Philippe Égalité.

Less pleasing than these dignified and blameless examples of a disappearing class, is another type of provincial Royalists. The "petite noblesse de province," when not of more modern origin, is chiefly sprung from magistrates and merchants,[1] who in the last century obtained patents of nobility conferring fiscal privileges, without ever going to Court. Instead of resuming their place in the bourgeoisie they have, since the Revolution

[1] In addition to "noblesse d'épée" and "noblesse de robe" (conferred by judicial office), there were under the Ancient Régime "noblesse d'échevinage," conferred on sheriffs and civic officials, and "noblesse de finance," which was the general name given to titles purchased by rich roturiers. Before the Revolution there were probably at least 100,000 of these privileged persons in France, but many of them had become so poor that in way of life they could scarcely be distinguished from the peasantry. Such was M. de Corday d'Armont, the father of Charlotte Corday. The modern bearers of titles who swarm in the land are also descended from the unprivileged nobility created wholesale by Napoleon I. and, to a less extent, under the Restoration. There are, moreover, vast numbers of titled persons in France whose nobility is entirely of home manufacture.

abolished nobility, multiplied beyond the dreams of the monarchs who first elevated their ancestors. Uncontrolled by any authority, they use what titles they please without restriction; the younger children of counts and barons whose original creation, when authentic, was limited to primogeniture, calling themselves and all their sons' sons counts and barons in perpetuity. For generations a large proportion of this class has in its "gentilhommières" lived the life of small farmers or graziers, while bringing up its sons with the idea that their condition forbade them to earn their living honourably, even in the liberal professions. The French testamentary law, which compels parents to divide their property among their children, with its corollary the system of dowry universal in the nation, makes remote the prospect of actual indigence for the members of this class who refuse to work; but their means are as a rule slender. Thus from their material condition, from their lack of cultivation, and indeed from their descent (their nobility, when genuine, being usually attenuated), they really belong to an inferior grade in the social category. But, disdaining the occupations proper to their station, they lead lives of aimless, when not dissipated, idleness; and in the country towns of their resort they model their morals and demeanour on the pattern of the fashionable Reactionaries of the capital. Thus they bring discredit on the rank they affect, on the Church which has educated them, and on the monarchical cause which they loudly patronise. In the few regions of France where the Royalist sentiment is ingrained in the hearts of the people, the pitiful existence and character of many of the men of this class are recognised and deplored. In the Vendée, where the Republic has never been loved, members of the

clergy and of the hard-working bourgeoisie, of Royalist faith, have assured me that the unsatisfactory example of these "hobereaux" is an important cause of the loss of the department as a monarchical stronghold.[1]

IV

The foregoing glimpses of provincial types display the quality of the monarchical cause in the country, and contemplating it together with the figure of the Pretender and the record of political incapacity of the Reactionaries, incidentally noted on former pages, we understand why the Republic may deride the prospect of a Restoration, even at times when political scandal or anarchy disposes the nation to desire another form of government. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the proceedings of the Socialists might, as in the middle of the century, so alarm the prudent classes of the towns and the rural populations as to impel France to seek a strong system of government to check anarchy and to establish confidence. Under such circumstances what prospect is there of the nation turning to the Duc d'Orléans, as it did to Louis Napoleon after the alarms of 1848? The name of Bonaparte at that period was the symbol of military glory, of order, and of the Revolution, and though the Napoleonic dynasty has disappeared, those three traditions are as potent as ever to inspire the sympathies of the nation.

The Duc d'Aumale, as we have seen, personified them; so it is not because his grand-nephew is a member of the

[1] In 1885 the deputation of the Vendée was entirely Royalist; in 1889 it returned one Republican and five Reactionaries, and in 1893 four Republicans and two Royalists.

House of Orleans that that young prince is not deemed to possess them. The Revolutionary tradition he inherited as his birthright, but having joined with his father in cutting off the entail that patrimony is dissipated: and though his kinsmen have been gallant soldiers, his own name has no association with the glamour or the authority of the army. If the Duc d'Orléans attained the throne it would be as a constitutional king; for, in spite of his repudiation of the name of Louis Philippe and of his antique travesties, he would have to accept a charter with a better grace than did Charles X., and on the wider basis of universal suffrage. The practical effect of such a change would be the perpetuation of the parliamentary system in the hands either of inexperienced Reactionaries, or of more expert Republicans rallied to the Monarchy. Thus all the ills disparaging the Republic would be repeated with the addition, at the top of the new fabric, of a Court; and in it the monarch would have to create innumerable ceremonial posts for persons of the class which, with the politicians, is, at the close of the century, the least creditable element of French society. Aristocratic from the point of view neither of heraldry nor of philology, it would have all the unpopular attributes of an aristocracy. For its brief duration it would be the apotheosis of the cosmopolitan plutocracy which has overwhelmed the once brilliant society of Paris, where it first found a footing under the untoward auspices of the Court of the Second Empire, of which this revival would be a deteriorated copy without the support of a military autocracy.

A Court may be of active benefit to a people even in a modern democratic state. The character and tastes of

the sovereign may make the palace the centre of the highest life of the nation, adding a lustre to lofty pursuits, which otherwise are deemed respectable rather than brilliant, and elevating the view of the whole community. Thus the death of the Prince Consort, by practically depriving England of a Court, was, as we have observed, the most important national event in the last half of the century, withdrawing the only influence capable of checking the aggressive march of plutocracy which has transformed the character of English society. But the Queen was only able to impose her high standard on the Court, and to see it reflected on the nation, by reason of the stable authority of her office in the eyes of her subjects as expressed in a watchword of those days, "Our young Queen and our old Constitution."

Considering that the whole achievement of the united Monarchical party, no longer rent asunder by Legitimist and Orleanist factions, or rivalled by Bonapartists, has been to identify itself with the triflers of the capital who are destitute of influence, and with the recluses and rural sportsmen of the châteaux, of ill tradition in the eyes of the peasantry, it is not surprising that it has driven out of its ranks the electorate of France. At the elections in 1885, when the deaths of Gambetta and of the Comte de Chambord had removed the only popular figure in the Republic and the most unpopular obstacle of the Monarchy, the country showed that if skilfully guided it would be willing to try a change of régime: of the votes polled 45 per cent were given to the Reactionaries, and if they had obtained one-half of the abstentions, the Republic would have come to an end. In eight years the Comte de Paris and his followers had exterminated

the monarchical sentiment in the nation. Scandal after scandal had meanwhile discredited the Government of the Republic, yet in 1893, on the morrow of the Panama affair, the electorate, of two evils, preferred the doubtful probity of the Republicans to the certain incapacity of the Royalists; so the Reactionaries obtained only 16 per cent of the votes recorded, and if every elector who abstained from the poll had voted for them, even then they would have been in a hopeless minority. In 1885 thirty departments in every region of France declared for the Monarchy. In 1893 two in Brittany and one in Normandy alone returned a bare majority of Royalist deputies.[1]

It would be waste of time to examine the monarchical organisations in the country, which organise nothing but defeat, such as the societies of middle-aged gentlemen which, under the volatile name of "Jeunesse Royaliste," celebrate the feast of St. Philippe with banquets and speeches. It is equally useless to dwell upon the proceedings of the shrunk monarchical minority in the Chamber. Excepting the speeches of the late Mgr. d'Hulst, a learned ecclesiastic, whose frigid oratory was better suited for the lecture-room than for the pulpit or the tribune, it is not easy to find a single utterance of weight or of interest made by a Royalist deputy in the Chamber since the centenary of the abolition of the old Monarchy, as though there were a fatality in dates. Far different was the attitude of the minority in the Corps Législatif under the Second Empire. Till the year before the War at its strongest it never attained half the number to which the Reactionary Opposition in the

[1] Morbihan, Côtes du Nord and Calvados.

Chamber of Deputies has fallen at its weakest. Even then the Monarchists remained fourteen times as numerous as the famous "Cinq" who terrorised the Imperial Government, which prohibited the publication of their speeches, and who attracted the attention of Europe. Under the Third Republic, where every word uttered in Parliament is officially printed and circulated, to cheer with incoherent violence the fluent attacks of the Socialists on the Republicans of other groups seems to be the most active vocation of the Monarchical remnant in the Chamber. To one who watches the painful spectacle of would-be champions of the throne and the altar boisterously applauding the disciples of the Commune, it becomes clear why the prospects of the restoration of a parliamentary Monarchy are remote.

CHAPTER III

THE PLEBISCITARY ELEMENT

I

If the restoration of a parliamentary Monarchy be improbable, it does not follow that the Republic is established in perpetuity. There is an element in the nation whereof the importance cannot be gauged by the character of the shadowy parties or groups which in quiet times presume to represent it. The Bonapartist, Revisionist, and other plebiscitary organisations are insignificant coteries directed by insignificant people: the principle they obscurely advocate is a sentiment latent in the French nation, which is brought to the surface not by the intrigues or the arguments of propaganda, but by periodic currents of popular feeling. Such a tide, when it sets in, may carry some individual to the throne of France. It may be an Orleans: it may be a Bonaparte: but whoever it be, he will be placed on the perilous eminence, not as a member of this or that dynasty; he will attain it because his figure and his personal character, real or supposed, have touched the imagination of the people of France, or because he is the nominee of the hero of the hour, who prefers to delegate the supreme power. Had the Comte de Paris been brought back as

King by General Boulanger, it would not have been as a rightful heir restored to the throne by a Monk, as was suggested at the time. He would not have returned as the successor either of Charles X. or of Louis Philippe. He would have assumed the Crown because a soldier of fortune, finding the kingly office inexpedient for himself, chose him as its titulary, as he might have chosen Prince Napoleon, or, indeed, some personage destitute of dynastic pretension.

The contrast between the situation of the Plebiscitary cause and that of the Royalists is remarkable. The Royalists form a conspicuous section of the population, both in the gay society of the capital and in the secluded châteaux of the provinces; but prominent without importance, and wealthy without influence, it is improbable that they will ever bring back to France, as a constitutional monarch, the pretender of their hopes. The Plebiscitary doctrine, on the contrary, can scarcely be said to be professed by a party; yet one day it may be put into practice by a majority of the nation.

As for Bonapartists, strictly so termed, they sparsely survive, scattered through the land. There are veterans of Sebastopol who still cut their gray beards after the Imperial pattern, which was not yet so called when young captains, at the bidding of the Prince President, they fired the cannon on the people of Paris, as they will sometimes boast in a whisper. There are beauties of the Tuileries who, growing old, look back with loyal regret to the epoch of their triumph when the name of Metternich suggested diversion rather than diplomacy, in the interlude, fatal for Austria and for France, between Solferino and Sadowa. There are bearers of the names

of more famous battle-fields of the First Empire, or of Italian provinces which they have never seen, whose houses and lands, confiscations of the Revolution, they owe to the patronage of Napoleon, though all of these cannot be counted as Bonapartists: some of them, without the excuse that peaceful heirs of warlike names have for accepting the established government, have for reasons of fashion become adherents of the Orleanist pretender.

In the country the Napoleonic legend is said to linger among the peasantry, whose fathers gave their votes for Louis Bonaparte against General Cavaignac, believing it was the great Emperor who had come back.[1] It was in the rural electorate that lay the strength of the Second Empire, and the peasant still preserves a vague recollection or tradition of the reign of Napoleon III. as a period of prosperity, having some connection with the Revolution, which in a dim former time put down the seigniorial privileges of the châteaux. But the sentiment no longer finds expression at the ballot-box, and of the few anti-republican politicians who are returned to the Chamber not one in ten proclaims himself a Bonapartist.[2] In the

[1] In the same way, when the chances of the Comte de Paris seemed serious, the peasant with less enthusiasm used to say, "C'est Louis Philippe qui revient." In the Haute Savoie I was told in 1894 that there were mountain villagers who believed that Napoleon III. was still Emperor. As to the Bonapartism of the peasantry a Conservative deputy of the Aveyron, who supported the Comte de Paris, told me that the majority of his rural electors were Bonapartists, and in the Landes the owner of a large estate, whose father was the local agent of the Comte de Chambord, but who himself had rallied to the Republic, informed me to the same effect. In both these departments the great majority of the electorate now vote for Republican candidates.

[2] In 1893 at the general elections there were 73 anti-republicans of all categories returned to the Chamber, and only 6 are openly described in the *Biographical Handbook of Deputies* as Bonapartists or Imperialists.

department where Napoleon last set his foot on French soil before the Bellerophon bore him to captivity, which had remained an Imperialist stronghold[1] during many crises of the Republic, I witnessed the general elections of 1893 and the Reactionaries were swept clean out of its representation, not even setting up a candidate in five of its seven constituencies. Old peasants would prattle with indistinct regret about the Emperor, but the younger men who complained that times were harder than when their fathers married, admitted that the phylloxera was more manifestly the cause of their changed fortunes than the Republic: and in no part of France was the indifference of the electorate more profound than in this Bonapartist region.

This was remarkable, because a literary and dramatic revival of the Napoleonic legend was then at its height in the capital. The enthusiasm of writers, of artists, and of the Parisian public for all that concerned the Emperor and the glories of the Empire was so keen that it deserves attention. During the first twenty years of the Republic the chief safeguard against the revival of the Napoleonic legend was the recollection of the Second Empire; and the smoke of the conflagration which overwhelmed it clouded the name of Bonaparte. The death of the Prince Imperial discouraged its partisans in the street and at the polls; while in the study the disparaging narrative of Lanfrey and the pitiless dissection of Taine continued the work of iconoclasm. But the Boulangist movement revealed that Cæsarism was ever latent in the French nature; while its failure proclaimed that

[1] Charente-Inférieure.

Cæsar had not yet appeared. So when the Panama scandal displayed the turpitude and impunity of politicians, military adventure being discredited as a remedy for parliamentary ills, the public of the capital consoled itself with a literary *coup d'état.*

It was the centenary year of the manifestation of the genius of the Jacobin officer whose artillery at the siege of Toulon commenced to turn the sordid bloodshed of the Revolution into the more imposing slaughter of the Empire. Napoleon caused a hundred-fold more sorrow and suffering to the French than did Robespierre and the Terrorists, whose patronage initiated his career of carnage; yet while their memory is held in merited execration, the tradition of his achievements has given more satisfaction to the descendants of his French victims than all the subsequent inventions of civilisation for the increase of human well-being. The nation may be better off under the Third Republic than under the First Empire; but material prosperity, though becoming the ideal of modern communities, does not yet suffice to satisfy the sentiment of a people possessing a valiant and romantic past. The Panama scandal was a typical outcome of the materialism of the age, which in different societies takes different morbid forms. In France the outbreak of the malady among politicians was favoured by the peculiar debility of the parliamentary constitution. Thus when the middle-class anarchy, calling itself popular government, was bringing discredit on the nation, the image was evoked of the master whose first title to civic respect was the expulsion by his grenadiers of the ill-famed representatives of the people, in spite of the claim to be inviolable of Deputy Bigonnet and other

patriots of importance in 1799:[1] the memory was revived of the single genius which, evolving order out of the chaos of the Revolution, constituted the firm fabric whereon French society still rests. Moreover, the meanness of the vices, revealed in parliamentary circles, conceived to enhance the domestic comfort or the irregular luxury of mediocre politicians, was in contrast to the legend of public splendour of the Empire won by hardship, self-denial, and valour. Thus the memoirs of a lieutenant of the Emperor[2] relating with Gascon exuberance the glorious rigours of the camp and the battle-field, touched a chord of popular sentiment which echoes the belief of philosophers as well as of warriors, that as civilisation progresses, war, with all its nameless horrors, becomes more essential for society, to save it from falling into materialism.[3]

The enthusiasm for all that concerned the Emperor of that considerable section of the French population which is affected by literature, art, and the drama might have

[1] Jean Bigonnet was the member of the Cinq Cents who, when General Bonaparte appeared at the door of the Orangerie at St. Cloud, where they had just assembled on the 19 Brumaire, seized him by the arm, exclaiming, "Que faites-vous, téméraire? vous violez la sanctuaire des lois." — *Mignet, Hist. de la Révolution*, c. xiii. His name reappears in the Hundred Days when he was nominated Mayor of Macon by Napoleon, who at that moment was compelled to accept the services of enemies much more celebrated.

[2] General Marbot.

[3] "Permanent peace is a dream, not even a beautiful one, and war is a law of God's order in the world, by which the noblest virtues of man, courage and self denial, loyalty and self-sacrifice, are developed. Without war the world would deteriorate into materialism." — *F.-M. Count Helmuth von Moltke as a Correspondent*, translated by Mary Herms. This extract from a letter written by the Field-Marshal to Professor Bluntschli is almost a quotation, probably unconscious, of a passage of Kant.

had manifold consequences if a political crisis had supervened, bringing to the front a hero with martial figure or a name to touch popular fancy. But it was an epoch of disillusion and lassitude after the Boulangist adventure and the scandal of Panama; so the cult of Napoleon was established for a season as a consoling moral exercise rather than as a political manifestation: just as sceptical Parisians, who rarely enter any other church, find comfort in kneeling at the shrine of Our Lady of Victories in times of peace, when there is no pressing need to invoke the mediatress of the God of Battles. Though this glory-craving sentiment is innate in most Frenchmen, the majority of the nation has neither the leisure nor the culture to quicken it with mental stimulant; so the peasant who never heard of the Memoirs of Marbot, or the plays of Sardou, or the pictures of Raffet, went to the polls that year, or abstained from voting, unaware that a wave of intellectual Bonapartism had passed over his lettered compatriots. The latter also were equally unaffected in their exercise of the suffrage, for the good reason that there were neither candidates nor questions before the electorate having any connection with the revived passion.

Every precaution has been taken by the guardians of the Republic to remove plebiscitary temptation from the reach of their countrymen. We have seen how Gambetta's electoral system of scrutin-de-liste was repressed till he died, for fear it might be used for a plebiscite in his favour, and how then it was only tried to be discarded in a panic, which the plebiscitary apparition of General Boulanger roused. Similarly, whenever any manifestation has been made in favour of the procedure called

referendum, the Republican authorities have hastened to check it with all the Napoleonic powers with which the central Government is invested to restrain local demonstrations. In 1888 several provincial municipal councils, before deciding definitely on projects entailing expense on their communes, had submitted them to the decision of the whole body of electors, distributing voting papers marked "Yes" and "No," accompanied with explanations of the questions at issue. Boulangism was rife, and though these proceedings seem all to have been initiated for purely local purposes, the Government of the Republic, fearing the plebiscitary tendencies of the people, put them down. M. Constans, the Minister of the Interior, who had been called to office to kill Boulangism, and whose qualities would have made him an admirable instrument of despotism, wrote a circular to the Préfets, which is a most instructive exposition of French Republican ideas on the liberty of the subject, on local independence, and on the scope of universal suffrage.[1] From

[1] Despatched March 23, 1889, but not made public till the following month, after the flight of General Boulanger. Some years later (November, 1892) the Municipal Council of Paris proposed that a question involving the price of gas in the capital should be decided by *referendum*, and the Préfet of the Seine, who attends the meetings of the Council as the agent of the central Government, said it might vote the resolution if it pleased, but by the terms of this circular the vote, being illegal, would have no effect. The Préfet, M. Poubelle, since French Ambassador at the Vatican, treated the question with summary disdain: "J'ai cherché dans le dictionnaire administratif la signification du mot et j'ai lu 'referendum, mot Suisse.' On veut bien me rappeler qu'avant d'être Suisse ce mot était Latin de la bonne Latinité. Or les mots Latins n'ont pas beaucoup de succès en France. Le mot 'véto' n'a jamais été compris. Eh bien! mettez ensemble Mme. Véto et M. Referendum et renvoyez-les dos à dos." Notwithstanding this provocative reference to Marie Antoinette, the Radical Council passed its resolution, but, as the Préfet had warned it, it had no effect.

beginning to end its arrogant tone is that of the official ukases of the Second Empire. Citizens, he declares, have no right to meddle directly in the management of public interests confided to their mandatories, who, if they require advice, get it, unasked sometimes, from the "competent authorities." Moreover, a local body in convoking the electors encroached on the privilege exclusively reserved to the Préfet of the Department, or to the President of the Republic, and entailed on citizens useless waste of time. It was pleaded that the crisis called for dictatorial measures to save the people from the abyss of dictatorship — that is to say, the parliamentary Republic used the Napoleonic machinery to carry out the Napoleonic principle that the people of France must never be trusted to work out its own destiny.

The end of these precautions is to make impossible at normal times a plebiscitary manifestation, which could only be effective with the administrative machinery in sympathetic hands to direct the elections or to provoke a popular vote by irregular means. It was for this that the Republicans who revised the Constitution in 1884,[1] recalling the history of 1851, made ineligible for the Presidency members of families which have reigned in France. Thus the way is closed for any Prince, even not a Pretender, who, like the son of the Duc de Chartres, might serve as a figure-head for the commonwealth. Prince Henri d'Orléans has made no sign that he wishes to rival the pretensions of his cousin; yet the fact that a member of a family, prone, from the days of the Regency, to intrigue against the elder branch, has cultivated, before the eyes

[1] L.C. 13–14 Août, 1884, A. 2.

of the public pursuits more arduous than those followed by the Pretender of his house, has caused him vaguely to be regarded as a young man for whom the next century may reserve an important destiny.

II

There are two brothers struck by the same incapacity, who bear a name apter to rally the voices of the people of France. Their father, the son of Jerome Bonaparte, some time King of Westphalia, was born after the death, at St. Helena, of his uncle; but though Prince Napoleon wore the features of the great Emperor, was intelligent, and under the Second Empire was not unpopular, owing to his opposition to the rule of his cousin, he lacked qualities essential to support the burden of his name, so after the death of the Prince Imperial he was never a serious pretender. Of his sons the value, mental, moral, and physical, is little known in France. The elder, by primogeniture and by the law of the Republic which has exiled him, is held to be the heir of the Empire, so in that character from time to time he issues a manifesto, as he is bound to do. It has no effect, but on the other hand Prince Victor has not committed publicly any acts to prejudice his chances should they ever arrive. The younger brother, Prince Louis, is an officer in the service of Russia, and that, in view of the relations of France with that country, may peradventure be a significant appointment. It is possible that should the Franco-Russian alliance lead to the end hoped for by every Frenchman who has applauded it, France would accept from the Tsar whatever ruler he pleased to offer her, provided he endowed his nominee

with Alsace-Lorraine for an appanage; or short of that eventuality, if a member of the house of Bonaparte signally distinguished himself in the front rank of an army fighting side by side with the troops of France, they might in case of victory acclaim a name which echoed the tradition of a hundred years before.

The centenary is at hand of the battles of the Napoleonic epic. It may be that amid undisturbed peace the dates will be recalled as historical anniversaries and nothing more. Those of the victories of Arcola and Rivoli which General Bonaparte won for the Republic have passed unnoticed. But should the dawn of the new century be darkened with the storm-clouds of war, when every month contains days which a hundred years before marked the progress of the glories of France growing with the fame of one man, from Marengo to Austerlitz, and from Jena to Wagram, the desire may be kindled for history to repeat itself. It may be that unknown soldiers will arise to emulate the General, who made the Consulate for himself, and turned it into Empire; for though the name of Bonaparte would give high advantage to one who bore it valiantly in the field on a battle-day of the Emperor, without new achievement it will not unaided bring its heirs to power. The wonder is that it has retained so long the freshness of its potent charm, for a hundred years are a great span in the life of a nation. When Louis Bonaparte was in prison at Ham in 1845, who remembered that it was the centenary of the supreme victory of Marshal Saxe? though Fontenoy was then so little distant that half a century later aged men are living who have seen survivors of that fight.[1] But Maurice de Saxe seems

[1] A few years ago I was staying in a château in the Aude with the

to belong to the distant past, in which Condé and Bayard, Charles Martel and the ancient heroes of French warfare rest, because the Revolution, which his young soldiers lived to see, put a barrier between all the national history that went before and came after it; out of which change of things came forth the colossal figure of Napoleon to dwarf all other warriors.

Vain as it is to conjecture the nature or the consequences of the next European war, if, when it occurs, France and Russia are still allies and fortune favours them, to endow the French with an autocratic ruler, in celebration of their united victory, would be an appropriate reparation for a Tsar to perform for the share of his ancestor, Alexander I., in imposing upon France a parliamentary constitution in 1814. Although the masses are not conversant with the details of the First Restoration, some of the enthusiasm they lavished upon the Tsar when he visited Paris was probably a tribute to his arbitrary quality, from a people which, for twenty years, had endured the worst form of parliamentary government. It was said that the plaudits of the crowds were addressed to the chief of a sympathetic nation which had taken France out of her isolation; but had it been possible for the sister Republic of America to perform that office, it may be doubted if the spectacle of the President of the United

Marquis de Laurens Castalet, whose father then had the liveliest recollection of having when a child seen his grandfather, who was an officer at Fontenoy in 1745. A later recollection of this venerable gentleman, who is, I hope, still alive, was the sight of the red coats of the British soldiers, welcomed at this Château de Castalet by the delighted Royalists, when in April, 1814, they stopped there from their pursuit of Soult, after the needless battle of Toulouse, which had been fought after the dethronement of Napoleon; the slowly travelling news not having reached Languedoc in time to prevent the unnecessary bloodshed.

States promenading the boulevards with his citizen colleague of France, would have produced the same democratic rapture. The French saluted, in the person of the Tsar, an autocrat, the absolute master of legions, which at a word from him may one day march to victory side by side with the armies of France.

If the French had not this instinct of submission to an arbitrary ruler, they would have shaken off the mechanism of autocracy which they have voluntarily endured under their democratic Republic, as though to preserve it for the hands of a master when they set one up again. From our English point of view, the increased degree of liberty which the Republic, as compared with the Second Empire, permits the French to enjoy is inconsiderable. The censorship of the press has been reduced, and there is no more restriction on the publication of legislative proceedings. But there is no liberty of association, no liberty of assembly or of procession in the street; liberty of public meeting is subject to paternal regulation;[1] a citizen's domicile is not inviolable, and if charged with a crime, he is submitted to proceedings, which to us suggest the usages of the Stuarts. More than that, the whole ma-

[1] The law of June, 1881, which is supposed to have conceded Liberty of Public Meeting, was a development of the law of 1868, with which the Liberal Empire widened the *Droit de Réunion*. The permission of the administrative authorities is no longer required for the holding of a public meeting, but the restrictions still enforced are manifold. A formal declaration of the time, place, and object of the gathering has to be signed by two well-known citizens, and deposited, twenty-four hours in advance, with the Préfet of Police at Paris, with the Préfet or sous-Préfet in provincial towns which have those functionaries, or with the Mayor in smaller places. Strict regulations also have to be followed as to the composition of the bureau and the duties of the President, and an agent of the Government has the right to be present on the platform. Meetings in public squares, parks, or streets are as rigidly interdicted as under the Empire.

chinery of centralised administration is preserved in the masterful form which it took from the hands of Napoleon. We have seen how it exists for the control of parliamentary elections, and the unfettered powers permitted to municipal authorities in matters of local government and of police are not extensive.

All this state of things, which would not be tolerated in England under a Monarchy, is in France accepted under a Republic, because the French and the English have different ideas as to the amount and the quality of individual liberty necessary to surrender as the basis of orderly government. The people of France are not oppressed by the Napoleonic rule, whether it be exercised by a plebiscitary dictator or by a parliamentary Republic. The tradition exists that they are worried by functionaries and vexed by official routine; but one may live among them for ten years without having personal experience or observation of any such grievance. For the law-abiding householder of tranquil habits, France is usually a land of untroubled amenity to dwell in. For citizens of demonstrative nature or calling it is less agreeable; and it is that minority which appreciates the slightly extended liberties enjoyed under the Republic. The peasant in the fields, the soldier in the barracks, the tradesman behind his counter, or the student among his books is equally unconcerned at the restraints on journalism enforced under the Empire, and at the restrictions on public meetings continued under the Republic. The revival of an autocratic régime need not restore all the discipline of the Second Empire. It is even possible to conceive a sagacious dictator increasing the popularity which had borne him to power, by doing

away with vexatious limitations on liberty, which a parliamentary Republic has failed to rectify. He might completely reform the treatment of untried prisoners, which, even as tardily modified in the twenty-eighth year of the Republic, retains features constituting a graver outrage on the principle of liberty than the occasional suppression of a newspaper.[1] The advantage of unfettered journalism would have been more apparent in France if it had used its complete freedom under the Republic to compel, years ago, the abolition of this grievance, the partial redress of which, after a quarter of a century of representative government, was the work neither of the popular press nor of the popular House of Parliament, but of that reactionary institution the Senate, at the instance of M. Constans, the most autocratic of all French statesmen.

The retention by the Republic of the more stringent of the Imperial limitations on liberty throws some light on the popularity of the Second Empire. Outside Paris, which was the accomplice of the fatal follies of that régime in its heyday, as well as their denouncer in the hour of retribution, the mass of the French people in no sense regarded it as the oppressor of their liberties. This was always well known to impartial students of the period, and an unexpected witness has been found whose testimony is unimpeachable on the relations of the Second Empire with the nation. Before the vicarious disasters of Sadowa and Mexico had sounded their note of warning, M. Taine, who disliked equally the Imperial govern-

[1] It may be doubted if, amid the licence of the press under the Republic, journalism has ever been as brilliant or as effective as in the days of the Imperial censorship, when "Prévost-Paradol excellait avec J. J. Weiss dans l'art de tout faire entendre sans tout exprimer et où 'M. Communiqué' bombardait la presse de ses avertissements."

ment and the democracy, was ranging the provinces as itinerant examiner of candidates for St. Cyr, noting his daily impressions to aid his painstaking studies on modern France. His original notes, mostly made in pencil as he travelled, have come to light several years after his death, and their special value lies in the fact that they were the candid comments of a minute observer, recorded for his private use. As the result of twelve years of dictatorship, he remarks that "France is organised for the benefit of the peasantry and the lower middle-classes."[1] An Imperial proclamation on the eve of a plebiscite might well have adopted this sentence as an electioneering motto. But it was not in praise that M. Taine wrote it: it was the criticism of a philosopher impatient at finding throughout the land wide-spread prosperity and unambitious content instead of high ideals. Written as a condemnation of the régime, it now serves another purpose — to help to dissipate the obstinate legend of an oppressed population, which, amid tears for the disaster of Sedan, hailed the defeat as a deliverance from tyranny.

To the posthumous testimony of M. Taine may be added the opinion of his friend M. Renan, who, like him, had suffered from the arbitrary proceedings of the

[1] *Carnets de Voyage, Notes sur la Province*, 1863–65. The same burden runs through the whole series of these most interesting notes: that the lower ranks of French society were so prosperous and happy that the nation was becoming Philistine. The remark cited above was made in Anjou. In Touraine M. Taine writes, "Je retombe toujours sur cette idée, que la France est une démocratie de paysans et d'ouvriers bien administrés." While at Marseilles, referring to the whole community, he says, "Il faut admettre en ce pays un essor soudain de la prospérité publique, pareil à celui de la Renaissance ou du siècle de Colbert. L'Empereur entend mieux la France et son siècle qu'aucun de ses prédécesseurs" (1863).

Second Empire. Writing shortly before his death, as a contributor to the public press, he declared that the Empire in its later years "accorded the largest amount of liberty possible to be realised in France without provoking excess"; and so impartial was this opinion that on the same page he mentioned how at that epoch his efforts to enter the legislature had been frustrated by Imperial pressure. The inexpiable fault of the Empire was, as M. Renan said in the same place, the unsuccessful war:[1] and, indeed, there are few episodes of modern French history more pitiful than the concluding period of the reign of Napoleon III., when he allowed his efforts to establish a liberal policy to be set off by the extravagances of a Court, which brought discredit on monarchical institutions, while diplomacy was abandoned and the army neglected. Recognising this and far from being the apologist of the Second Empire, I only wish to indicate that as the parliamentary system has failed in France, and as the prospect of a long unbroken peace is doubtful, it is possible that circumstances may impel the French people to submit themselves again to an authoritative government; and in that case it is conceivable that the bulk of the democracy may be as content as when it enjoyed, under a parliamentary constitution, the same administrative institutions and similar limitations on liberty.

Dearer to the French heart than liberty, or perhaps even than prosperity, is military glory; and the popular-

[1] "L'Empire libéral a fait une faute irrémissible, la guerre: après tout cependant il donna peut-être la plus grande somme de liberté qu'il soit permis de réaliser en France sans provoquer des excès." — *Le Journal des Débats sous le Second Empire*, E. Renan.

ity of the Second Empire reached its height, not in the plenteous days of unsoaring comfort lamented by M. Taine, or of liberal concessions praised by M. Renan, but in the earlier arbitrary period when a war had wasted the resources of the land and covered its soldiers with laurels. The Italian campaign was an ill-conceived enterprise, involving France wantonly in complications which finally led to Sedan. Yet at the end of the century the most cherished memory of French people of all classes who have passed middle age is, in my experience, the return of the troops from Italy. Thus, an old legitimist noble, who detested Louis Napoleon and his anti-Bourbon, anti-Papal interference across the Alps, wishing to fix the date when his club was lodged on the Boulevard des Italiens, remembered it was from that site he witnessed the exhilarating spectacle in 1859. A professor of a peace-inspiring art had one event to assure him of the period when he helped to make the renown of a famous restaurant — the march past its windows of the soldiers of Magenta and Solferino. A cottager in a distant province, who was born in the capital, chiefly recalled the street where his father was a concierge, because it was on the line of procession of the glorious return from Italy. And this should be noted well: the triumphal pageant on the eve of the great Emperor's birthday, nearly forty years ago, the like of which is the spectacle of all others desired to be seen again by the French, took place months before the Treaty of Turin gave to France her spoils of war. Two of the fairest provinces of Europe were then added to French territory; and the health-giving beauty of the coasts of Nice and of the mountains and fertile vales of Savoy, became such a rich dowry for France that she

ought sometimes to remember who joined them to her when she imprecates the name of Louis Napoleon as though his only achievement were the loss of Alsace and Lorraine.[1]

[1] The Peace of Villafranca was signed on July 11, 1859; the victorious troops marched into Paris on August 14. Though the designs of Napoleon III. on Nice and Savoy were suspected before the war, after his interview at Plombières with M. Cavour on July 21, 1858, so little was known for certain about them even after the Peace that the *Times*, though unfriendly to his policy, did not hint at them in its annual summary of December, 1859. The first public intimation of the projected annexation appeared in the semi-official *Patrie* on January 25, 1860, and the Treaty of Turin was signed on March 24 of that year.

CHAPTER IV

THE RALLIÉS

In the foregoing account of the anti-Republican forces in France no mention has been made of one, which in continental Europe is looked upon as the stronghold of reaction. For twenty years after the Franco-German war Gambetta's definition of clericalism as the enemy of the French Republic seemed to be justified, the Catholic Church in its political capacity having become a vast electoral agency of the Monarchical party. Had the result of this alliance been the restoration of the Monarchy, Rome would have shared in the triumph and the Holy See, afflicted by the fall of the Empire, would have been strengthened. But the most tangible consequence of the combination was to identify in the eyes of the French the interests of the Church with the fortunes of a maladroit faction. This did not escape the notice of the sagacious Pontiff who mounted the apostolic throne the year after the "Seize Mai," when the Royalist policy of the Gallican Church had become in the hands of Gambetta one of the strongest forces to consolidate the Republic.

The first elections in France after the accession of Leo XIII. took place while the application of the Ferry Laws was displaying how far the enemies of the Church might with impunity go with their intolerant procedure. The

electorate, instead of showing itself scandalised at the outrages offered by the Republic to priests and nuns and to religious emblems, deserted the clerical cause all over the land, a phenomenon which could not fail to strike the Pope, who knew that the population of France was not irreligious. At the next elections, in 1885, when the Reactionaries recovered ground, Gambetta was dead, as also was the Comte de Chambord, whose existence had specially identified the Royalist cause with the Church. Then ensued the Boulangist movement, which pressed upon the Holy See the unwelcome truth that the good of the Church was not the primary aim of the Monarchists. In Catholic châteaux the anti-clerical *Intransigeant* became the favourite organ, its editor, M. Rochefort, a martyr for the Commune, being the trusty counsellor of General Boulanger, who thus for a season brought that truant noble into sympathy with his own class. In Paris at the elections of 1889 the Faubourg St. Germain returned to the Chamber a Radical journalist, put forward by the Boulangists, rejecting a respected supporter of the Church and the Monarchy.[1] A year later the strains of the *Marseillaise*, played by Cardinal Lavigerie's Pères Blancs at Algiers in honour of the French squadron, dismayed the Royalists when wafted across the Mediterranean; and

[1] In the seventh arrondissement of Paris, which includes the Faubourg St. Germain, M. Denys Cochin, a member of a family distinguished in the Catholic world for generations, was rejected in favour of M. Mermeix, a Boulangist journalist, formerly on the staff of the *Voltaire* and of other anti-clerical newspapers. The most conspicuous Boulangist leaders after the Catholic Royalists had rallied to that party were M. Rochefort; M. Eugène Mayer, editor of the *Lanterne*, who rivalled him as a "mangeur de prêtres," and was also a Jew; M. Laguerre, a freemason and freethinker; M. Laisant, one of the first advocates of military service for seminarists; and M. Naquet, the author of the divorce laws.

when no rebuke came from the Vatican to chide the bold missionary prelate for the choice of his tune, they felt that something was wrong, and hoped to check it by stopping their contributions to the African propaganda.

The following year the impetuous Mgr. Freppel died. Named Bishop of Angers under the Empire, he had never ceased to combat the Republic both in and out of the Chamber, where he sat as Reactionary deputy for Finistère. His patriotic ardour gained him the esteem of politicians whose domestic policy he detested, while his energetic advocacy of Monarchical principles was an example and a reproach to the members of his party. The Comte de Paris, publicly expressing his regret for this intrepid partisan, in a letter to M. d'Haussonville repeated the familiar theme that the only salvation for Christianity in France was in the restored monarchy. Whereupon the Pope published his Encyclical,[1] long meditated, whereby he clearly indicated to French Catholics that their duty was to accept the Republic, it being the firmly established form of government. This prodigious document disburdened Catholic theology in France of a dogma which had been preached for twenty years, to the effect that to be a good Christian it was necessary to be anti-Republican; and its practical effect was to offer the Monarchical sons of the Church the alternative of rallying to the Republic or of abstaining from politics. The Bishops, though almost all had owed their appointments to the Republic, some of them by acts of subserviency in the days of their humble priesthood, tried to explain away the force of the Papal injunction; but by a letter to the French cardinals Leo XIII. made his meaning clear.[2]

[1] February 16, 1892. [2] May 3, 1892.

It had already been accepted without hesitation by the first Catholic layman in France.[1] The Comte Albert de Mun was a figure to whom the Royalists had reason to look up with respect: eschewing the way of life followed by the majority of his class, he had redeemed from barrenness the parliamentary reputation of his party by adorning it in his person with the first of French political orators. By birth a Legitimist, and by observation persuaded of the social mission of the Church to the masses, he was in reality farther removed from the middle-class Republic than are most members of the French nobility, which has become a bourgeoisie of fashionable pretension without tradition or conviction. Not recognising that fact, the triflers of gay boulevards and of sleepy châteaux treated M. de Mun as though he were an apostate who had betrayed a laborious and intelligent party; while devout women made prayers for the conversion of a Pope who had conceived the anti-Christian doctrine that France was not to be saved by a revolution in favour of the grandson of Louis Philippe.

M. de Mun was not a party-leader, because party-leaders do not exist in France, but he was the most considerable figure among the Royalists, and his defection would have damaged a stronger cause. To him the action of the Pope was not unwelcome, because it was part of the new democratic policy of the Vatican, first formulated by Cardinal Manning, with whom the Legitimist exponent of Christian Socialism was in perfect sympathy. In spite of the im-

[1] M. de Mun resigned from the "Union de la France Chrétienne," a monarchical association, on March 24, 1892, but from this act of passive obedience to the Papal injunction he soon passed to public conformity, which he announced at a Catholic Congress at Grenoble on May 23 of that year.

pression which English Catholics would fain promulgate, that the head of their Church in England was not a great man, in his last years no British subject had so important an international position in the world as had Cardinal Manning. Thus, when it was seen that the Holy See had chosen Cardinal Lavigerie to sound the rallying note, the significance of the choice was recognised, for it was known that the intimacy of the Archbishops of Westminster and of Carthage did not rest wholly on their aversion for African slavery. Moreover, the Pope himself, at the moment of issuing the Encyclical, announced that his resolve to enjoin submission to the French Republic was encouraged by the progress of Catholicism in the Republic of the United States, and the chiefs of the American hierarchy most considered at the Vatican were certain bold prelates who had, in imposing their democratic policy on the Holy See, invoked the authority of the great English Cardinal.[1]

Though it was part of that popular movement in the Church, which, notably in America, had made the Catholic democracy the object of hopes perhaps too sanguine, the Papal action in France was founded on a special basis. The Holy See had not to deal with a community passionately attached to the Republican form of government, and bewailing that the attitude of the Church thereto perpetuated a conflict between the faith of its fathers and the régime of its fancy. The Pope did not imagine that the Sunday after the issue of his rescript thousands of Opportunists would troop to mass while the *Domine salvam fac rempublicam*, intoned at the altars they had shunned, would no longer have the sound of a mere concordatory

[1] *E.g.* the memorial on the Labour Question addressed by Cardinal Gibbons to the Congregation of the Holy Office in February, 1887.

formula, recited with mental reservation as to the force of the Latin, but of an apostolic invocation of divine unction on the Constitution of 1875. No such phantasy crossed the mind of the judicious pontiff. He foresaw that materially the Church in France might suffer from his action, while it was improbable that the Government of the Republic would relax its vexatious treatment of the ecclesiastical establishment. But Leo XIII. was resolved that in his reign the Papacy should not be deemed identical with reaction, and in pursuing that policy he had not used ruthless haste in disavowing the French Royalists. The Church, while the majority of those who frequented its ministrations were supporters, active or passive, of the Republic, had too long seemed to make common cause with a dwindling section of the population which, frivolous in private life or incompetent in public affairs, did not scruple to use its most sacred mysteries for political purposes.

One of the most comforting practices of the Catholic Church is the commemoration of the dead; and its diffusion among all classes of the people is a touching feature of French national life, of which we, more callous in England, have now unhappily no counterpart. Apart from all question of dogma, the cult of the dead fills the human heart with sentiments of disinterestedness, purer than can be attained by any other pious exercise: so to divert to profane and sordid uses the solemn office ordained by the Church for the repose of souls is a double sacrilege, which the Royalist party, with certain members of the Orleans family, did not shrink from soon after the issue of the Papal rescript. It was the centenary of the execution of Louis XVI., and the Republic being then

involved in the scandal of Panama it would have been legitimate for its enemies to make what secular use they pleased of the blood-stained blunder of the Republicans in January, 1793. But they conceived the idea that requiem masses for the King would be an effective demonstration against the Government. Probably no mortal ever left this world so prepared for the supreme change as Louis XVI., and the words attributed to the Abbé Edgeworth on the royal scaffold, bidding the son of St. Louis mount into heaven, express the opinion of the Church, that the unhappy monarch's earthly discipline had redeemed his intermediate pains. If modern Royalists would say masses for the repose of a king of the Ancient Régime, Henri IV.[1] were a needier object of their charity, he having been cut off unshriven and unannealed. Moreover, that gallant prince, beloved of all the people of France, was also the ancestor of the Orleans family; while Louis XVI. was but a distant kinsman, and its only connection with his death was that its chief was one of his executioners. If an Orleans Prince were moved on the 21st of January to make solemn expiation for the crime of Philippe Égalité, he might well do so in the privacy of his oratory; but when members of that house, under the pretence of praying for the soul of Louis XVI., made a Parisian church the scene of a fashionable

[1] The death of Henry IV. (1610) is not too remote to permit of masses being said for him. A requiem was said in March, 1895, at the church of St. Eustache for Molière, who died in the same century (1673); and it seems that there is no limit of time prescribed by the Church, as shown by the ready wit of a Parisian priest, who, being requested by some irreverent students to say a mass for the repose of the soul of Homer, replied that he would do so the next morning if they would supply him with the certificate of the death of the father of poetry.

demonstration against the Republic, advertised in the journals between the last parliamentary scandal and the gossip of the boulevards, that profanation of a holy rite justified anew the Pope's action.

This was the view taken by the most authorised ministers of the Church in France. The cathedral of Tours being chosen as the theatre of a like display, the Archbishop told the Royalists that they might have a low mass said in a chapel, of equal efficacy though shorn of pompous music and trappings, but that they should not turn the high altar of the diocese into an electoral tribune. In thus banning the performance, Cardinal Meignan was known to be speaking with the voice of the Vatican; but he was also unconsciously repeating the language used by the Orleanist Government,[1] less tolerant than the Republic, which, to secure Louis Philippe on his debatable throne, forbade the very ceremonies unbecomingly revived by his dispossessed progeny.

Gallicanism is said to have died with Mgr. Dupanloup, its last eminent exponent, but the old Gallican spirit still lingers in France in the thoughts and actions of Catholics who call themselves Ultramontane. This expiring struggle of the Reactionaries revealed the survival of the idea that the Church was the handmaiden of the Monarchy, and as the Royalist remnant has not at its disposal the powers with which Louis XIV. coerced her two hundred years ago, it uses less feudal methods of punishing a dependent. Thus in the fervent diocese of Toulouse the bounty of the faithful to the Church had, in the years succeeding the Encyclical, so shrunk from

[1] Circulaire du préfet de Finistère résumant les instructions qu'il avait reçues du Ministre de l'Intérieur, Janvier, 1881.

its former abundance that a Roman cardinal wrote to his colleague, who occupied that see, complaining of the diminution of Peter's Pence; and the venerable Cardinal Desprez, who was a bishop before the Second Empire, is said to have significantly replied that the Apostolic treasury had better ask the Nuncio at Paris to make up the reduced oblations. Some Catholic Royalists, when bidden by the Pope to rally to the Republic, not content with silently suspending their offerings, ventured even to retort, "Why does not Your Holiness set us the example by making your submission to the Quirinal?" and the force of Gallican audacity could no further go than in presenting an *argumentum ad hominem* to the Vicar of God. Less subtle was some of the language used by French Catholics towards the Holy See, and so violent that in certain dioceses the bishops were moved to interdict the circulation of Reactionary journals which repeated it.

The Papal Encyclical of 1892 may be looked upon rather as a signal that the monarchical opposition to the Third Republic was extinct of life than as a cause of its extinction. Leo XIII. decreed that the Royalists should not utilise the altar as the substructure of a rickety throne, which, if ever set up, would probably soon come crashing down, bringing with it part of the ecclesiastical fabric. But though the monarchical opposition is extinct, and the restoration of the Bourbons improbable, it is not certain that the parliamentary Republic is established in perpetuity, and should it disappear, the Holy See will accept the new régime with less deliberation than it took to recognise the Republic. Meanwhile it has the credit of having created a new group to increase

the confusion of the parliamentary system, and of adding a new epithet to political terminology. The word "Rallié," though its meaning is perfectly clear, is not only untranslatable into the English language, but it is one of those pregnant terms which express a whole chapter of national history.

Although the Papal rescript invented the group, it must not be thought that all the Reactionaries who rallied to the Republic at the elections of 1893 were pious Catholics, whose sole guide in public and private action was the Church, or, indeed, that rallying to the Republic only commenced at that period. On the contrary, the great majority of Frenchmen who were of age in 1870, and who have since supported the Republic, were "Ralliés." As M. Léon Say well remarked,[1] the first of them were named Thiers, Casimir-Périer, Rémusat, and Dufaure. Some of the founders of the Republic, like Gambetta, Grévy, Jules Ferry, and Jules Favre, no doubt were Republicans from the beginning, but many of the politicians most identified with it had accepted the Empire, and probably would have continued loyally to serve it had it endured. Two of the ablest Prime Ministers under the Constitution of 1875, M. de Freycinet and M. Ribot, began their careers in the Imperial service, as also did President Carnot. Their subsequent history does not imply inconsistency. Indeed, they showed themselves to be most appropriate representatives of the great majority of the people of France, whose practice it is to accept the existing régime; and each one established in France during the century having been a phase of the Revolution, even those citizens for

[1] Banquet du Journal des Débats, 1893.

whom it does not suffice merely to be peaceably governed have, for the most part, been able to accept the successive changes without violent surrender of principle. In a land which has had the history of France it is not necessary to have either the talent or the turpitude of Talleyrand[1] to rally to a series of régimes; and since the Revolution there have been tens of thousands of virtuous, commonplace Frenchmen who have not only submitted to succeeding forms of government, but have honestly served them.

Efforts have been made to subdivide the deputies of the group of Ralliés[2] according to the attitude of its members to the Constitution of 1875; or to analyse it according

[1] M. d'Haussonville, the Academician and great-grandson of Mme. de Staël, having loyally fulfilled the forlorn task of representing the Comte de Paris in France until that prince's death, felt bound to attack the policy of the Pope. Yet the tradition of his own family was one of perpetual rallying to successive régimes. His grandfather, who, born in the reign of Louis XV., lived to the eve of the Revolution of 1848, managed to be on good terms with most of the intervening governments of France. He began his career in the service of Louis XVI., in the intimate circle at Trianon known as the Coterie of the Queen. He emigrated at the bidding of his father, returned to France with the Consulate, and grew so well disposed to Bonaparte that he became a chamberlain in the Imperial Court. When the Emperor abdicated he escorted the Empress Marie Louise to Blois. Having performed that duty he was forthwith appointed by Louis XVIII. to the Mousquetaires Gris du Roi, and after Waterloo he was made a peer of France before his late master had reached St. Helena. Finally, his intimate relations with the court of Charles X. did not prevent his taking the oath to Louis Philippe when he usurped the throne. The story was related by his son, the father of the agent of the Comte de Paris, also an Academician, in his interesting *Souvenirs de l'Émigration.*

[2] Out of 568 deputies (not counting those of Algeria and the colonies) 27 Ralliés were returned at the election of 1893. The total number of votes given for candidates of that group was about half a million out of a register of over ten millions. The total poll of Republicans of all shades amounted to nearly six millions: the Reactionaries numbered little more than one million and the abstentions over three millions.

to the motives which prompted each one to join it, one having rallied from Ultramontane piety, another from Legitimist hatred of the Orleanists, another from weariness at belonging to a party shut out from Government favour. The attitude to the Ralliés of Republicans of longer standing was also interesting to observe. The sincerity of the new converts was generally challenged as a reason for not sharing with them any of the substantial advantages which the profession of Republicanism had earned for many years. The sterner guardians of the Constitution also cast imputations on their new allies, suggesting that they had entered the Republic either to taint it with their reactionary ideas, or else with the intention of obtaining in it place and influence, so that in the day of trouble they might hand it over to the enemy. It is possible that when the term of the Republic arrives the last barricades in its defence will not be manned by prosperous insurgents who will die waving the Papal Encyclical; and it is improbable that M. de Mun will scour France to rouse with his clarion eloquence a crusade against the monarchical principle. But the Ralliés who in that day repeat the rallying process in a direction adverse to the Republic will be accompanied or preceded by several millions of Republicans whose faith has never been called in question. There is no nation in modern times which has sacrificed more for the sake of theories and forms of government than France; yet there is none which contains a larger proportion of citizens indifferent to the name of the régime under which they perform their daily task, whose chief desire is that the course of the world may be so ordered that they may lead quiet and peaceable lives.

CHAPTER V

THE LEFT CENTRE

THERE is a section of the nation which, though almost extinct as an element in the legislature of the Third Republic, deserves more than a passing word. The Liberal bourgeoisie has had more influence in shaping the history of modern France than any other party or group. The middle-classes which made the Revolution had previously got into their hands the civil government of the country under the absolute King, as well as its commerce and riches. In the Royal Annuals of the reign of Louis XVI., it is seen that the great majority of the officials in the magistracy and in the fiscal and financial administration of the land were members of the bourgeoisie: moreover, many of these names bearing the noble "particule" were of roturier origin, as a large number of functions conferred on the holders nobility, which was also to be purchased by those who deemed it worth their money. In 1793 the middle-classes found themselves overwhelmed by the application of their doctrines of 1789; and it is to be noted that of the heads which fell under the guillotine an immeasurably greater number belonged to the bourgeoisie than to the nobility, a disproportion too great to be accounted for by the emigration of the nobles. Executioners as well as victims were of

the middle-classes, and under the comparatively tranquil Directory, as under the Convention, there were no Revolutionary leaders who sprang from the people. While the licence of the Directory, like the horrors of the Terror, was a phase of the first experiment of middle-class government in France, the survivors of the Liberals of 1789 gazed dismayed at the anarchy born of their ideas, and regretting the discredit fallen upon them, they welcomed Bonaparte as the saviour of the country from the Jacobins.

The autocracy of the Consulate and the Empire was not, as is sometimes supposed, a period of complete effacement for the Liberals of the Revolution. It afforded them their opportunity of leaving a mark on the institutions of the land. Most of the bourgeoisie, indeed, shunned public affairs at this epoch, and turned to consolidating their private fortunes; but those who consented to serve an imperious master had a greater share than the politicians of any later day in constructive achievement, for the Civil Code and the organisation of the educational system was the work of Liberal jurists and philosophers employed by Napoleon in his reconstruction of society. Some of them who had not disdained the nobiliary titles which the Emperor scattered broadcast on his servants were not more content with the autocratic régime than others who stood aloof; and when the Empire fell there were senators, functionaries, and magistrates, who had served it, as eager for constitutional government as those who had been in exile or in forced retirement.

After the disappearance of the one-man power of Napoleon ensued the palmiest days of the exponents of

the doctrine of 1789. Whether in opposition under the Restoration, or at the head of affairs under the July Monarchy, the Liberals displayed such qualities in literature and in eloquence, that no one who studies the period can help regretting that the French are not a parliamentary people, so that they might have established in perpetuity constitutional government by the aid of statesmen who combined culture with common sense and moderation with lofty ideals. The Doctrinaires and the Liberals,—Royer-Collard and Barante, the Duc de Broglie, whose wife inherited the opinions of her mother, Mme. de Staël, with some of her genius, Guizot and Rémusat,—contained within their ranks most of the political talent of France in the days when Lamartine and Victor Hugo were Catholic and Royalist in their ideas of statecraft, and revolutionary only in their literary tendencies. The Revolution of July, which brought M. Thiers on the scene, inspired, by reason of its superficial resemblance with 1688, the fancy that henceforth the history of France was to proceed on the constitutional lines of the history of England. When the Middle-class Monarchy ended, the last of the men of 1789 had disappeared, and the heirs of their doctrine were for the future to play only a secondary part in the affairs of the country. The Second Empire, though it submerged them, owed its foundation partly to their alarm at the menaces of socialism and of anarchy manifested in the Revolution of 1848. Under the autocracy, revived on a democratic basis, the moderation and high character of the Liberals saved the anti-Imperial Opposition from the reproach of being the party of disorder, and inflicted more damage on the Government than the violence of extreme Republicans.

After the war with Germany they became the nursing mothers of the Republic born on a day of defeat and insurrection; but having secured its existence their services were dispensed with. It is said that had M. Thiers lived to carry out his plan of making Gambetta his first lieutenant in a ministry chiefly composed of members of the Left Centre,[1] the Liberalism of the July Monarchy would have dominated the politics of the Third Republic. It is one of the many futile speculations inspired by the unfulfilled career of Gambetta, who, according to others, would have more probably restored the Second Empire without a Bonaparte at its head. All that is known for certain is that, since the death of Gambetta and the exclusion of the Left Centre from power, there has not been found in the Government of the Republic the talent of the one or the respectability of the other.

The term "Left Centre," though a convenient designation for the old Liberals, suggests a topographical idea which belongs to the past. Even in the years succeeding the War, when the group was of high importance, some old Republicans who later were regarded as characteristic survivors of it did not sit on its benches. MM. Barthélemy St. Hilaire and Jules Simon, for example, in the early days of the Senate, were both classed in another group called the Republican Left, though at this distance

[1] M. Thiers, a month before his death, on the eve of the elections of 1877 which destroyed the Government of the Seize Mai, anticipating his return to the Presidency of the Republic, had informed Gambetta that he intended to make him his first Prime Minister, and to present him to Europe as Minister for Foreign Affairs, with M. Léon Say and M. Waddington as Ministers of Finance and of Education, M. Dufaure being President of the Senate, and Embassies being given to MM. Mignet, Jules Simon, and de Rémusat.

the distinction between the opinions they professed and those of MM. Léon Say and Waddington is not striking. The former, who left the Senate for the Chamber of Deputies in 1889, in the hope of strengthening the moderate Republicans in the Lower House, achieved there a position of remarkable authority without being able to revive the group associated with his name. Indeed, the sarcasm of the Radicals was not far removed from the truth when they said that the Left Centre of the Chamber was composed exclusively of M. Léon Say.

When one studies the doctrine of that party; when one finds its tenets held by the majority of Frenchmen who are neither fanatical nor indifferent; when again one examines the legislation of the Republic and sees how little it exceeds the professions of the Left Centre, it seems at first inexplicable that the fittest by training, tradition, parliamentary aptitude, and good repute to direct the affairs of the commonwealth, should have been excluded from all share of government in favour of inferior members of the same middle-class. The Liberals of the National Assembly, who parted company with the Orleanists and were the real founders of the Republic, were devoted to the principles of the Revolution, while the men who monopolised power and place after 1879 did not go beyond the doctrine of 1789. Later they shared the spoils with extremer politicians, though the advent to office of the Radicals left little trace on the statute-book of a nation where it is not the main function of the legislature to legislate. During the period, however, when the Republic was first governed by Republicans the professions of the politicians known as Opportunists, and of those of the Left Centre, were so identical that

M. Léon Say was the first whom Gambetta invited to join his ill-starred ministry in November, 1881, their views being practically harmonious [1] on the relations of Church and State, on compulsory and lay education, on the reform of the magistracy, and on military organisation.

How was it, then, that men of high ability and experience, not disqualified by their principles, failed to keep their places, though after the Seize Mai all the centralised machinery of power actually was in their hands? The disquieting presence of Gambetta in the land was one reason. The Moderates declined to adopt him as the heir of M. Thiers' testament and honestly mistrusted him as deeply as did the intriguing friends of his own household. The nation was beginning to acclaim him, and that was enough to condemn him in the eyes of those who regarded plebiscitary tendency as the negation of the principles of 1789. The groups which henceforth were to govern France were composed of flexible politicians of no particular tradition, who, opposed to dictatorship which would deprive them of their occupation, were competent to utilise the machinery of centralised government as a means of electoral pressure with the co-operation of obscure but powerful local coteries.

Such methods of operating upon and organising the

[1] M. Léon Say, after the formation of the short-lived "Grand Ministère," said of Gambetta's invitation to him to join it, "J'ai pu constater très vite que sur les questions politiques nos vues pourraient aisément s'accorder."—*Discours prononcé le 7 Décembre*, 1881, *à la réunion des délégués sénatoriaux de Seine-et-Oise.* The point on which M. Léon Say based his refusal to join Gambetta was the question of the attributes of the Senate in financial matters; but the "Grand Ministère" was condemned in advance, and every politician of note whatever his opinions, declined to enter it.

forces of universal suffrage are, as we have seen, the sole alternative to plebiscitary manifestation in a nation without aptitude for representative institutions. They are also repugnant to parliamentarians, the inheritors of the tradition, and perhaps of the fallacies, of the men of 1814 and of 1830, who helped to import fragments of the British Constitution into France and set them up there.

Their theory was to ignore, or rather to misappreciate, the Napoleonic settlement, which came between the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Charter. Similarly, after the war with Prussia, their descendants imagined that the Conservative Republic, which they thought to have established, was a regular development of the Monarchy of July, the Second Empire having been an untoward interlude. But behind their new Constitution of 1875, as behind every experiment of government tried in France since the abdication at Fontainebleau, was the great centralised machine, which constitutional doctrinaires neither know how to manipulate nor wish to be taught.

The union between Gambetta and the Left Centre probably would not have lasted a year even if M. Thiers had lived to join them: not, as is popularly supposed, because Gambetta was a Radical and they were Whigs, but because he recognised the existence and the meaning of the centralised system on which French society depends, while the Liberals cherished their old phantasy that it was a framework not inappropriate for a constitution on the British model. "Centralisation as in England" was the dream of the Liberals of the Monarchy of July, and their successors would quote Tocqueville's

famous distinctions[1] between the governmental centralisation of the British Constitution and the administrative centralisation of France: but that penetrating observer saw that the latter was incompatible with the parliamentary system to which he was attached. Even the more modern representatives of the Left Centre seemed better fitted to be English statesmen than French senators and deputies. M. Léon Say, for example, though some of his most attractive gifts were those specially bestowed on the Gallic race, would have been a more appropriate minister of the Queen than of the Third Republic; less so, perhaps, in our later democratic period, but as a Peelite member of a Palmerstonian cabinet he would have been admirable.

In England, where the evolution of politics has produced the democratic Tory party, the moderate Liberals of a past generation can become Conservatives without change of principle, excepting when their new allies inordinately illustrate their democracy at the expense of their Toryism. But in France there is no political refuge for the moderate. The Reactionaries either represent unconstitutional views utterly repugnant to the doctrine of the Left Centre, or are the trifling exponents

[1] *Démocratie en Amérique*, vol. i. c. 5. *Cf.* the warning given by Royer-Collard, the chief of the Doctrinaires, in the early days of the Restoration to those who believed in the establishment of a British Constitution in France: "Donnez-vous donc la constitution physique et morale de l'Angleterre: mettez dans notre balance politique une aristocratie puissante et honorée. Or nous n'avons que des nobles et pas une aristocratie. Les institutions dans chaque gouvernement doivent être en harmonie avec le gouvernement lui-même." A fundamental distinction between the French bourgeois régime of 1830 and the middle-class ascendancy in England from 1832 to 1867 was here indicated in advance. There was nothing in the French nation which corresponded to the upper governing class, neither a legislative aristocracy nor a landed interest.

of pretensions which have no relation with the Government of the country. Excluded from the middle-class Chamber and from the frequent ministries issuing from it, the representatives of the Liberal bourgeoisie, for whom few places are now to be found even in the Senate, are still welcome beneath the renowned dome of the Institute of France. Their opinions also still have a channel of publicity in the *Journal des Débats*, of which the respectable annals for a century are the history of French Liberalism.

It is not surprising that the members of this school have looked with envy to England, often idealising our institutions when not vainly dreaming of importing their similitude to France. In that country we shall never again inspire the sincere admiration which its past generations lavished upon us, admiration so peculiarly abstract in character that it was compromised more gravely by the distant dynastic question of the Spanish marriages, which put M. Guizot into wordy conflict with Lord Palmerston, than by the victory and defeat of Waterloo, when Englishmen and Frenchmen slew one another in order that France might be assured in the quiet enjoyment of an imperfect copy of the British Constitution.

CHAPTER VI

THE OPPORTUNISTS

THE word "opportunist" has been frequently used in these pages, as is inevitable in a treatise on the government of France at the end of the nineteenth century; yet one may live for years in that country without ever meeting an Opportunist. In parliamentary circles persons so labelled abound, and Cabinets composed of them have followed one another in swift succession, so that a diplomatist or other stranger whose duty it is to watch the political movement in the capital might have conceived that the term was almost synonymous with Republican. But outside the governmental society of Paris one may frequent all classes of the community, and even investigate their civic faith, without ever hearing the epithet. Apart from the indifferent mass of the population which accepts the existing régime without troubling about doctrine, there is in most regions a certain number of the inhabitants who hold decided views on public questions. Among them clericals and anti-clericals, free-traders and protectionists, republicans, monarchists, radicals, and socialists are apparent, but never a citizen who designates himself as "opportunist," except in the rare case of a local politician who is the agent of a deputy, or who himself aspires to a seat in Parliament.

That a passing epithet applied to the occupants of certain benches in a legislature should not be familiar beyond its walls is conceivable; but that the predominant party in a long period, which saw the rise and fall of twenty ministries, should have borne a name repeated daily in a hundred journals, yet never assumed by any portion of the electorate, is a feature of the parliamentary system to be found only in France. The word Opportunism seems to date from the first year of the Constitution of 1875, when ministries were composed of coalitions of Republicans and Reactionaries, and M. Thiers was still hoping to recover power. In a debate on Municipal Reform in the Chamber, Gambetta, who had already shown his capacity by leading the advanced wing of the Republicans into practicable ways, substituting "a policy of results for a policy of chimeras," said that for the former phrase he preferred the expression "policy of opportunism."[1] There was no originality in the idea, excepting for its being proclaimed by a French politician presumed to be a Radical. The term he devised was shared after his death by his adherents and his enemies, who perverted its meaning and combined to form a party which directed the affairs of the country for half a generation, without prestige and without revealing that it had any principle more definite than that of securing the spoils of office. Hence the word Opportunist became a term of reproach in the appreciation of all other groups, incurring the sober condemnation of the Left Centre as well as the intemperate violence of Reactionaries and Socialists.[2] For failing

[1] Chambre des Députés: Séance du 12 Juillet, 1876. Littré, in the last supplement of his Dictionary issued before his death, admits the word *opportunisme* as a neologism, on the authority of this speech of Gambetta.

[2] For instance, on the eve of the elections of 1893 the *Journal des*

to carry out Gambetta's "policy of results" since his death the Opportunists cannot be blamed, for such are the difficulties of parliamentary government in France, that if every one of their cabinets had been packed with heaven-born statesmen their achievements would not have been more ample. A reproach which they have merited is that they have ignored a precept most wholesome and essential in the democratic State, that respectability is the great justifier of mediocrity in high places; for in the scandals which have marked the parliamentary history of the Republic, Opportunist politicians have been conspicuous.

As those who professed the opinions ascribed to Gambetta have had a most preponderant influence on the political annals of the Third Republic, it is worth while to consider for a moment his character and personality. His gospel has had no lack of expositors. Besides the adroit politicians who traded on his posthumous tradition, adapting it to their own policies and performances, a band of faithful friends survived him, editing his speeches, defending his actions, and expounding his doctrine with disinterested good faith. These loyal disciples have taken pains to defend the memory of their master against the aspersion of Cæsarism potentially imputed to him.

Débats, summing up the attributes of the various groups before the electors, said: "Plus à gauche se trouvent les hommes que faute d'épithète plus précise on désigne sous le nom d'Opportunistes. Ce sont eux qui ont dirigé depuis quinze ans la politique de ce pays. On sait comment ils l'ont conduite. On sait à quels actes de faiblesse, à quel abandon de toutes les idées de gouvernement les a réduits leur crainte de mécontenter l'Extrême Gauche" (July 25, 1893). There is no need to quote any of the extreme opinions on the conduct and character of the Opportunists. The violent press, Royalist, Bonapartist, Socialist, and (except at periods of coalition) Radical, with perfect unanimity, treats Opportunism as the synonym of every turpitude, moral, social, and political.

His intimate colleague, M. Spuller, for example, who had the placid temperament of a German professor, seemed to believe that Gambetta aimed at nothing more than a gentle revision of the Constitution of 1875, whence would emerge an "Athenian Republic" wherein centralisation and parliamentarism would genially harmonise; while a contented people would, by the salutary *scrutin-de-liste*, elect patriotic deputies to vote beneficent and tolerant laws under the statesman-like guidance of a great tribune. It is a pleasing picture, its cardinal defect being that the central figure would have put the composite design in the category of chimeras of which he proclaimed himself the demolisher.

In my belief the Liberals who detested autocracy on principle, the less scientific Republicans, who dreaded plebiscitary power from its association with Sedan, as well as the professional politicians, who saw in the parliamentary system a source of profit, and the jealous, who frowned at the elevation of a compeer, were all quite right to mistrust Gambetta; but I hasten to add that he was equally justified in giving them cause for mistrust. The regret expressed in these pages at his career cut short would be meaningless if the only promise he had given were that of a parliamentary statesman. For an English writer to make such a lament by the light of his native prejudices, would be as rational as though a Russian publicist were to bewail for England the untimely death of Prince Albert as one who gave promise of being an accomplished autocrat. Autocrats are neither wanted nor produced in England, just as parliamentary statesmen can neither be reared nor utilised in France. Wherein consisted Gambetta's popularity, and why does his legend

linger in France,[1] not merely on the lips of politicians who trade on his name, but in the imagination of the people? It was not that he achieved anything during his short ministry, or in the longer period of his "occult power." Nor did the men of his choice do him credit; neither when he made an ambassador of M. Challemel-Lacour nor when he set over the Ministry of Public Worship M. Paul Bert, a free-thinker of aggressive bigotry; while some politicians called by him from obscurity were among those who later brought gravest scandal on the Republic. Are we to believe that the people acclaimed Gambetta because they admired him as a fitting successor to M. Grévy in the Presidency of the Chamber and to M. Ferry in the Presidency of the Council, destined to take his brief turn as Prime Minister with MM. Duclerc, Brisson, Goblet, and Rouvier, going down

[1] The idea has become so fixed in the minds of Republican politicians that Gambetta represented all their views, all their policies, and all their leaders, that the singular fictions composed in his memory should perhaps not be ascribed to disingenuousness. For example, in 1896 at the yearly pilgrimage to Les Jardies, where he died, M. Delpeuch, Under-Secretary of Posts and Telegraphs, speaking of MM. Spuller and Challemel-Lacour, who were authentic friends of Gambetta, said that "the chief ambition of these men was to have the tradition of their name united to his, as was that of Jules Ferry." The friendship of Ferry for Gambetta has been dealt with on p. 206. The orator also declared that Gambetta was the originator of the Franco-Russian alliance, "he having prepared it in his conversations with Skobelef, and it being till his death his constant preoccupation." Now not only had Gambetta nothing to do with the understanding between France and Russia, but in talk with intimate friends he was violently anti-Russian, and not a line of his writing nor a sentence he spoke in public suggests that he ever felt otherwise. Almost his last words in the Chamber (July 18, 1882) were, "Ne rompez jamais l'alliance Anglaise." A minute account of his ideas on foreign relations is given in *Le Ministère Gambetta*, which his secretary, M. J. Reinach, wrote after his death in December, 1882.

to posterity on their roll of fame? The Gambetta whom his countrymen looked to was not the parliamentarian. It was the organiser of the army of the Loire; it was the orator of Cherbourg, whose invocation of hope for the mutilated frontier so thrilled the nation that it was compared to the first glass of champagne given to a convalescent; it was the leader of commanding presence, whose voice of authority moved not merely those eager for a return of military glory, but the great mass of the French people, who ever feel the need of a master's hand to guide them. It was for this that his rivals postponed the essay of the electoral system of *scrutin-de-liste* till he was dead; for, whatever its abstract merits, they believed, as he did, that under it two-thirds of the departments of France would acclaim the name of Gambetta in a plebiscite of undisguised meaning.

Opportunists who had charged Gambetta with aiming at dictatorship, and who, after his death, utilised his name as the trade-mark of their parliamentary group, obviously found it politic to treat his memory as that of a great parliamentarian; but the protestations of his loyal disciples no further account need be taken of. The most intimate pupils of even sedentary philosophers are not always the best expounders of their doctrine, but in the case of a man of action his associates are no better judges of his unfulfilled achievement than are other spectators. Of such an one it is useless to quote the utterances or the writings.[1] If Bonaparte had died at Rivoli what light

[1] For example, in August, 1881, being acclaimed at a great popular meeting in Paris, he said, "Ne criez pas 'Vive Gambetta.' On dirait encore que c'est de la dictature," and this is quoted seriously as evidence of his anti-plebiscitary feelings. — *Le Ministère Gambetta*, c. iv. It suggests Mark Antony's recital of what took place at the Lupercal.

would have been thrown on his aspirations by a study of his *Souper de Beaucaire*,[1] the tract he wrote in praise of the regicides and terrorists two years before their survivors gave him the command of the Army of Italy? Between the eager servant of the Directory and the hero of Brumaire who overthrew it there was not more difference than between Gambetta the defender of Delescluze under the Empire, and Gambetta the patron of General de Galliffet, who had shot down wholesale the comrades of Delescluze in the Commune; between the dishevelled Meridional who preached revolution at the Café Procope and the statesman who solicited M. Léon Say, the incarnation of the calm virtues of the bourgeoisie, to be his Minister of Finance; between the *fou furieux* of Tours and the last ally of the aged M. Thiers, who had so described him.

No statesman worthy of the name, even the most steadfast by temperament, was ever perfectly consistent. Putting aside the recantation of opinions, tenaciously advocated, for mean motives such as personal rancour or pecuniary profit, there are various influences which determine the tenor of a citizen's public life even in the most orderly communities. There are those termed subjective, which, in succeeding stages of his mental development, cause a man to change his view of the science of government and legislation. There are his associations in the

[1] The *Souper de Beaucaire*, in which Marat and Robespierre were extolled, was published when the latter was reaching the height of his power, at the end of 1793, by Bonaparte, Lieutenant of Artillery. He had it printed at Avignon shortly before arriving at Toulon, where he first came into notice. He was given the command of the Army of Italy in February, 1796, two years and two months after the siege of Toulon. His *coup d'état* of Brumaire was three years and nine months later, November 9, 1799.

commerce of human intercourse which modify his ideas. There is, moreover, the perpetual evolution of society, which produces new needs to be ministered to by the State as civilisation progresses, and Opportunism in its wholesome sense is the art of adapting oneself to changing circumstances, which thus arise even in countries free from political convulsion. In a land like France, where no form of government is stable, and where no generation is exempt from the prospect of revolution, this measured mutability does not suffice, and a statesman must be always prepared to do violence to some of his professions, or else to deprive the nation of his services. In the case of Gambetta we need not speculate what course he would have taken had autocratic power been offered to him by popular voice; but we can judge what would have been his duty had the nation asked him to substitute his dictatorship for the parliamentary system, the failure of which was already apparent. If he were under any illusion he was lacking in prescience, and his name ought not to be accounted great. Three years after his burial on the hillside at Nice, General Boulanger was Minister of War, and without achievement or talent was bringing the country to the brink of revolution, because the same crowds which with lamentation had escorted out of Paris the remains of Gambetta, wanting a master, turned to acclaiming a uniform and a sword, as there was no man left to lead them. It may be that Gambetta would have justified Mme. de Staël's opinion when, in appreciating Robespierre, she declared that none but a military commander could ever be a dictator in France. Gambetta had, however, a more warlike record if a less martial name than Louis Napoleon in 1848; and his failure seems to mark

the one occasion when France might have peacefully obtained, without insurrection or bloodshed, the form of government she ever needs.

The perpetuation of the parliamentary system has been more profitable to the Opportunist group than to any other section of the French population; and whatever their relations with Gambetta in his lifetime, its members became united after his death as guardians of the Constitution, though perpetually embroiled with domestic discussions as to the filling of the tutelary places of profit. The reign of the Opportunists has been severely criticised in France. It is said to have lowered the tone of government, thus setting a bad example to the nation, and at the same time depreciating it in the eyes of foreigners apt to judge a people by the character of its chosen rulers. Whatever the justice of that criticism, it is not easy to see where France under the parliamentary system could have found more creditable statesmen. On the Chamber depends the fate of Cabinets, which are consequently composed in chief part of members of the Lower House, and one may in vain search the lists of deputies for distinguished names not included in ministerial combinations. There was M. Léon Say; but though that solitary statesman may have had only etymological difficulties in forming himself into a group in the Chamber,[1] more material obstacles would have beset him had he essayed to form a ministry. He would not have found many sympathetic deputies to join him, and a Left Centre Cabinet composed

[1] M. Aynard, the eminent banker and economist of Lyons, who entered the Chamber the same year that M. Léon Say came down to it from the Senate (1889), shared his opinions on many subjects, but purists might object to applying the term "group" even to two persons.

of senators would have rivalled the Grand Ministère in brevity of life.

With Gambetta's potential Cæsarism out of the way, and the parliamentary system established for want of any other to take its place, it was clear that politicians of supple temper would preponderate in the direction of affairs. No group ever had a working majority in the Chamber, and until the Reactionaries collapsed they had always the power to overthrow a ministry by a temporary alliance with a cabal of its Republican rivals. The party which made the chief profit out of this situation was by no means destitute of men of ability. Two of them especially illustrated with remarkable talent the genius of Opportunism: not, indeed, according to the definition of Gambetta, whom they had thwarted while he lived; for though they adopted its first clause, which deprecated the futile pursuit of chimeras, they were less effective in the production of results. The origin and character of MM. Jules Ferry and de Freycinet were so different that their careers, directed towards the same end, deserve a a word of record.

M. Jules Ferry was a conspicuous member of the Opposition under the Second Empire, and no doubt a sincere Republican from his cradle. His Opportunism seems to have been acquired later in life, possibly dating from the foundation of the Republic, as that event erased from his political creed its most vital articles. The previous year he had made public profession of it in an extant document, which shows how considerable was the licence accorded to polemical literature under the Imperial despotism. In this address to the electors of Paris in 1869,[1]

[1] Circulaire aux électeurs de la VIme Circonscription, 1869.

he demanded entire liberty of association, destruction of administrative centralisation, separation of Church and State, and abolition of standing armies. Years later, when rallied in the Senate[1] for his repudiation of his programme, he confessed that he had abandoned "the Utopias of youth"; but as he was nearly forty when the Empire fell, that thoughtless stage of his life seems to have been conterminous with the reign of Louis Napoleon. Had he wished to propose to the Republic the reforms with which he threatened the Empire, he did not lack opportunity, as under the Presidency of M. Grévy he was for more than six years almost perpetually in office, being Prime Minister for more than half that period. The once indiscriminate threatener of institutions then displayed constructive statesmanship rarely repeated under the Third Republic. It was marred in his educational legislation by sectarian intolerance, so that the animosity of outraged Catholics was joined to the wrath of the Radicals, when the latter perceived that the universal demolisher under the Empire had developed the instinct of authoritative government. Thus the news of a military disaster in Tonkin when he was Prime Minister brought down upon him the unreasoning fury of the populace, which, as he fled for his life, must have recalled to him the similar scene when, on the morrow of Sedan, he utilised against the Imperial dynasty what he then complacently called "the patriotic and legitimate anger of the people of Paris."[2]

The genesis of the Opportunism of M. de Freycinet

[1] Sénat: Séance du 24 Novembre, 1891.

[2] Enquête parlementaire sur les actes du Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale. Déposition de M. Jules Ferry.

was entirely different. While his future colleague, M. Ferry, was baiting the Ollivier ministry, he was serving the Imperial Government. When on its downfall he was proposed as Préfet of Tarn-et-Garonne, the Republicans of Montauban threatened to sack the prefecture if a reactionary were placed there who had been "the official candidate of the Empire" at the local elections.[1] Yet M. de Freycinet's surrender of principle was less wholesale than that of his ally, whose Republicanism was indigenous. Unlike him, the Imperial functionary had never advocated the abolition of the army, or of the administrative system, or of any other establishment, which he and M. Ferry and all other ministers of the Republic have protected ever since. M. de Freycinet only displayed an agile alacrity in hailing the new régime under which those perennial institutions were to flourish anew. His official career under the Republic was of phenomenal length, commencing in the Left Centre Cabinet of M. Dufaure in 1877, and ending fifteen years later under the cloud of Panama. Such was his flexibility that in 1887 he, the old Imperial functionary, was the nominee of the Radicals[2] for the succession of M. Grévy, supported by M. Rochefort who, in the days of his battles with the Empire, had been protected by M. Jules Ferry,[3] now the Moderate candidate for the Presidency. Even in the intermediate

[1] Enquête parlementaire sur les actes du Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale. Dépêches télégraphiques officielles Dépt. de Tarn-et-Garonne à 15 Septembre, 1870.

[2] The day before the Presidential Election of 1887 M. Clemenceau having induced M. Floquet to withdraw his candidature, M. de Freycinet was the sole candidate of the Radicals.

[3] *Ibid.* In the Corps Législatif on February 9, 1870, two days after the arrest of M. Rochefort for an article in the *Marseillaise* on the assassination of Victor Noir.

period, M. de Freycinet resigned his first premiership into the hands of M. Ferry, who was his Minister of Education, because he could not follow his anti-clerical Radicalism. Such are the surprises of Opportunism.

In spite of M. de Freycinet's connection with the parliamentary scandal which terminated his public life, but which did not impugn his personal probity, he may be regarded as one of the most respectable figures among the politicians who have ruled France since the death of Gambetta. He was one of the rare Prime Ministers of France since that event who could wear the green palms of an Academician without being ridiculous. His election to the Forty was severely criticised as an act of subserviency to the Government of the Republic,[1] but M. de Freycinet was previously a member of another Class of the Institute, the Academy of Sciences, election to which usually depends on the intellectual achievements of the candidate, without reference to his social or political position. A Frenchman who is a member of two of the Academies which meet at the Palais Mazarin cannot but be a person of distinction, and that quality must be accorded to M. de Freycinet. On the occasion of his reception, M. Jules Simon, his colleague at the Senate as well as at the Academy, in one of those brief essays in which he used to signalise the event of the day with sapient charm, illustrating it from the store of his recollections, said that there were three types of Academicians elected by the

[1] M. Pailleron, the Academician, told me that when M. de Freycinet in the course of the canvass, which a candidate is by tradition forced to make, called on M. Renan, that master of irony informed the Prime Minister that he would be glad to vote for him "A moins que M. Carnot ne se présente." The witty author of *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie* had the story from Renan himself.

illustrious company, those whom it crowned, those whom it consecrated, and those whom it created; but with genial malice he refrained from classing the last Immortal. Under the Republic, to those who have done work worthy of crowning or of consecration, the temptation to take part in politics is faint. It would be a lamentable fate for the French Academy if it set many politicians on its chairs, but to take one occasionally from their sordid atmosphere is an act of benignant charity. M. de Freycinet at his reception was not unequal to the honour conferred on him. Émile Augier was his predecessor, whose eulogy he had to make, and his appreciations of the great dramatist displayed a national characteristic both salutary and pleasing. No matter how unsympathetic a Frenchman's trade, be he politician, lawyer, financier, or functionary, he rarely is destitute of literary instinct and conscience, knowing the reasons why he admires and why he ought to admire the masterpieces of his language — gifts which we should do well to cultivate before the English tongue ceases to be the noble organ of human expression which in time past was used to perfection in clothing thought in fine diction, with grace of style and purity of form.

A cynical student of the French political system might say that the reception of M. de Freycinet at the Académie Française deserved notice, because it was the most creditable incident in the history of the Opportunist party.[1] A

[1] M. Challemel-Lacour, who, as a friend of Gambetta, may perhaps be accounted an Opportunist, though he classed himself as a member of the Extreme Left (while M. de Freycinet belonged to the Republican Left, a more moderate group), was elected to the Academy some time afterwards. He had, however, then (1893) retired from active politics for ten years, though after his election to the Academy he unexpectedly became President of the Senate, on the sudden death of M. Jules Ferry.

better reason for referring to it is, that it recalls, on pages which treat of the less attractive features of national existence, the intellectual life of France, which has little to do with politics. It was observed that when M. de Freycinet took his seat beneath the dome adorned with the effigies of masters of French oratory, the practised debater of the Senate and the Chamber was less skilled in speech than the learned Academician who received him, M. Gréard, a professor of the University who had devoted his talents to the organisation of public instruction. It was a striking instance of the fact that the best of the ability of France shuns politics. The legislature had been scoured to find a statesman fit to take a seat in the company founded by a Minister of France, and when the best specimen of his class was produced he was, by a modest professor, outmatched in eloquence, the essential arm of a politician's equipment. What rich material France contains for ministries and legislative assemblies of the highest order! Around the tables of the Institute alone the gifts of oratory, wit, political science and knowledge of humanity abound. But the French are not a parliamentary people, and while they are waiting for a régime to suit them, they are unconsciously wise in not encouraging their worthiest sons to waste their powers in an ill-contrived Parliament.

Candidates for the Academy being bound by tradition personally to ask the suffrages of its members, M. de Freycinet found himself under the delicate obligation of thus soliciting a favour of the Duc d'Aumale, whom he, when Prime Minister, had expelled from France, having previously erased his gallant name from the army list. The pitiful affair of the exile of the Princes raised the

question of the capacity in which M. de Freycinet acted on that occasion. Was it the Imperialist reviving the method of his former employers? or the Radical bent on humbling the monarchical cause? or merely the Opportunist ready to adopt any policy favoured by the current of the moment? If the first theory may be discarded, it is interesting to see whether it were as a Radical or as an Opportunist that he then acted, as it involves the question of "Republican Concentration" — the long-lived system of blending in ministries the representatives of various Republican groups. Its critics complained that its primary result was the preponderance of the Radicals, and its ulterior consequence the postponement of the establishment of party government in France.

The proceedings of the third Freycinet Cabinet, which expelled the Princes in 1886 and was never excelled in representative character, threw some light on the former proposition. Besides its versatile President, it contained, as exponents of Radical doctrine, M. Goblet and General Boulanger, then the nominee of M. Clemenceau, while among its Moderate members were the respectable M. Carnot and M. Baihaut, who was afterwards imprisoned for frauds he then committed as Minister of Public Works. Its molestation of the members of families which had reigned in France had a Radical air; yet on close scrutiny it is seen that while there were Radicals in the Chamber who opposed the policy on principle, its most offensive details were carried out by, or at the instance of, politicians who had no real sympathy with the Extreme Left. The dismissal from the army of the Duc d'Aumale was executed by General Boulanger, who, for the moment a Radical, had been pre-

viously an obsequious courtier of that Prince, and a little later was the leader of the Royalists. The expulsion of the Duc d'Aumale was performed by M. de Freycinet to please the Moderate M. Grévy, who, at that time conniving at an agency for corrupt transactions in his presidential palace, was sensitive to affront; so when the high-spirited soldier, who in his career had bestowed as much credit on the French name as M. Grévy brought disgrace on it, wrote to the President of the Republic a haughty protest at his removal from the army, M. de Freycinet, though the Prince was neither a conspirator, nor a pretender, nor even the heir of a dynasty, expelled him from France, thus treating him as no Republican Minister dared treat the humblest journalist who ever libelled a public man.

These measures deplored by Liberals were carried out by the Opportunist Prime Minister at the instance of the Moderate Chief of the State, with the aid of a military politician soon to be the leader of the Reactionaries. Indeed, whenever the Opportunists have deemed it expedient to follow an extreme policy, they have not needed the presence of Radicals in their councils to encourage them. The anti-clerical excesses of MM. Jules Ferry and Paul Bert were accomplished under ministries which contained no Radicals; and during all the years since "Concentration" came into vogue, the action of the governments of the moment has not been perceptibly influenced by the presence or the absence of Radicals in the Cabinets. As a ministry never lives long enough to make its policy felt in legislation, and as the difference in principle and in action between the average Opportunist office-holder and his radical rival or colleague is

inconsiderable, a foreigner must be excused if he cannot see the importance attached by French politicians to the question of "Concentration."

The name indeed of Opportunist has in the closing years of the century almost fallen into disuse, except as a term of reproach, the new generation of politicians, which had no association with it in its days of promise, not wishing to label themselves with a title bereft of prestige. The respectable Left Centre having also disappeared, the vision has been cherished of a new Moderate party made up of the Opportunist remnant, and of other Republicans willing to combat with solidarity the malcontents of the extreme benches. The Chamber of 1893 seemed in its composition to favour the novel plan, as in it the more moderate Republicans outnumbered the combined groups of Radicals, Socialists, and Reactionaries. For all that, in the last Parliament which will reach a normal term in the nineteenth century, the customary series of six ministries succeeded one another in the quadrennial period.

One phenomenon has, however, been produced. For the first time since Marshal MacMahon's days two successive cabinets were formed containing not a single member of the ministry preceding it. More than that, one of these governments called itself Radical and the other Moderate. It is true that neither of these combinations has left any distinctive trace on the Statute-book of the Republic. Moreover, the hardiest proposal of the Radical Cabinet, the imposition of an income tax, was favoured by several members of the Moderate ministry which displaced it. Nevertheless, the idea has been promulgated that this marks the dawn of an era of party government.

Even if the habits of French politicians could be suddenly transformed, it would take some years to habituate the nation to the change. To establish the party system it would not suffice for ministers to cease from intriguing against their own colleagues, or even for cabinets to fall less often and for less incoherent reasons. It is not by transactions within a legislature that national tradition is altered. It is in the country and at the ballot-box that parties are organised and fortified. That the majority of the French electorate are men of moderation is certain; but they are indifferent as to the name or the professions of the Prime Minister of the moment; and there are no signs visible that their dread of the Socialists will rouse them to acclaim another set of parliamentary politicians belonging to the same social class as their predecessors and of similar antecedents. Should the middle-classes of the towns or the peasantry take alarm at Socialism, they will not seek their saviours among any denomination of parliamentarians. Meanwhile, ministerial instability, which the Opportunists perfected as a fine art, is likely to survive their name so long as the parliamentary system lasts in France.

CHAPTER VII

THE RADICALS

BUT for the group system the Radicals might perhaps have been a more redoubtable force in French politics under the Third Republic. The activity of some of their leaders, and the comparative definiteness of their aims, ought to have counterbalanced their disability of being a slender minority of the electorate; but long before the left wing of the party allied itself with the Socialists, the Radicals in the Chamber had no cohesion excepting as a destructive power, which, however, affected ministerial combinations rather than the institutions of the country.

The scare caused by the Commune after the war was not favourable to their popularity. At the first elections under the Constitution of 1875, the deputies returned to the Chamber were divided into seven groups, of which the Extreme Left was the second in numerical importance; the largest being the Gauche Républicaine, which sat between it and the Left Centre and contained most of the politicians who, later known as Opportunists, obtained the direction of affairs. The Extreme Left numbered about a hundred deputies, or less than a fifth of the House, but the Radicalism of many of them was

not of a steadfast or alarming nature. Gambetta, the next year to become the right hand of M. Thiers, was among them, with several of the most conspicuous Opportunists, such as MM. Rouvier and Constans, who later, for different reasons, incurred the bitter aversion of the Radicals. Others there were, like MM. Brisson and Floquet, who subsequently worked with the Opportunists, though retaining the designation of Radical, and formed with them Concentration cabinets. Some of the ultra-Radicals, like M. Naquet, the anti-clerical author of the Divorce Law, crowned their careers in the Boulangist party as the forlorn instruments of the Reactionaries. There were likewise a certain number of men of the Commune, representing the party of disorder which in later times, as we shall see, calls itself Socialist. Another type represented in the group has disappeared, leaving no successors — the Revolutionaries who enjoyed the lyrical patronage of Victor Hugo, just elected Radical Senator for Paris, which he thereupon lauded, as "a Babylon with the heroism of Saragossa." To have fought in the streets in 1848, to have been "a victim of December," were the chief claims on the sonorous protection of the poet, and M. Louis Blanc was the best known of the Radicals whom he supported with apocalyptic metaphors. The fact that one of the seven recognised groups of the Chamber thus contained all these conflicting elements and coteries may partly explain why the Extreme Left has not played a preponderant part in the history of the Republic.

The most conspicuous of the Radicals was M. Clemenceau, who used his remarkable talents in such fashion as to call down upon his head the resentment of his parliamentary

colleagues of all the Republican groups, many of whom had largely profited from the exploits for which they stigmatised him. He devoted his great ability to destroying ministries, and though his action was often advantageous for office-seekers, whose chance might never have come had M. Clemenceau not overthrown a cabinet at a particular moment, they declined to recognise in him a benefactor when their turn arrived to be speeded from power by his mordant eloquence. The fact that he never took the place of the ministers whom he had turned out long rendered him invulnerable; but when at last other circumstances made him the object of attacks, they were directed against him with a vigour so sharpened by the accumulated rancours of years, that he was pursued into his constituency in Provence by a band of resentful Parisian politicians, whose efforts caused the transfer of his seat to a Radical-Socialist of extremer views than his. Deputies who session after session had jubilantly followed him in his furious onsets on successive ministries then moralised on the sinister influence of the man who had thus rendered barren their legislature. Their unctuous reprobation both condemned the institution and reflected on themselves who feebly composed it; for, from the creation of the Chamber, no other deputy had been so often and so rapturously applauded by his colleagues as this relentless justiciary, when he mounted the tribune and proceeded to pass sentence on the quaking culprits of the ministerial benches below him.

If M. Clemenceau had ever been the leader of a great party, by it imposing his will on the assembly, the reprobation of his "sterile dictatorship" would have been

less disingenuous; but his political following, even united with the Reactionaries, would have been impotent without the internecine jealousies of the Opportunists who gladly utilised him. In the Parliament of 1881, in which in three and a half years he helped to upset the two Ferry Ministries, the Gambetta Ministry, and the second Freycinet Ministry, the Radicals were not fifty strong, or only a twelfth of the house, and when all the Reactionaries joined them, the Opportunists and Moderate Republicans outnumbered the coalition in the proportion of three to one. In 1885 the death of Gambetta and the fall of Jules Ferry had damaged the Opportunists, so the Radicals gained ground, though the Reactionaries chiefly profited; but even then the Extreme Left numbered barely a hundred in a house of now nearly six hundred members. In 1889, after the Boulangist affair, which had allied some of the Radicals with the Reactionaries, the Extreme Left was slightly reduced, and some of its members now called themselves Socialists. In 1893 it profited from the break-up of the Reactionary party; but Radicals and Socialists combined were fewer by a hundred and fifty than the Moderate Republicans.

As in France there is no gradual evolution of political tendency, it is misleading to draw prophetic conclusions from comparative electoral statistics. For example, the polls of 1881, compared with those of 1876, pointed to the extinction of Radicalism in the Chamber in a few years: whereas at the next elections the Extreme Left retrieved its numerical position. But so much is said of the menace of Radicalism, of the danger arising out of its association in ministries with Moderate Republicanism,

and of its alliance, on the other hand, with Socialism, that it is worth while to inquire, first, what is the Radical doctrine which inspires alarm, and, then, wherein the special peril lies of entrusting the government of the country to politicians professing it.

A most interesting feature in the Radical programmes which are periodically put forward under the Third Republic is their immutability. The programme of 1885 was modelled on that of 1881[1] and then handed down to serve as a pattern for 1889 and 1893. This shows that in France the party of innovation has a certain respect for what is venerable; and on closer examination it is seen that the object of reverence is older even than the Republic, for foremost among the reforms instantly demanded for the salvation of the country are the "Utopias" of M. Jules Ferry's mature youth at the close of the Empire. The whole baggage of the Republican Opposition in the reign of Napoleon III. is reproduced — liberty of association, separation of Church and State, elective magistracy, administrative decentralisation, and abolition of standing armies. The world has progressed in the course of a generation; silent revolutions have been accomplished in nations not accounted revolutionary, where Radical fantasies of thirty years ago are now turned into statutes by Conservative law-givers; but in France, under a democratic Republic, the reforms urgently called for in 1869 will still be yearned for in

[1] Programme du comité radical du 18e arrondissement de Paris accepté par M. Clemenceau: Août, 1881. Programme des groupes Républicains Radicaux Socialistes de la Seine: Août, 1885, etc., etc. The Radicals used to describe their programme as that of the Republicans under the Empire. "C'est le drapeau de 1869," said M. Clemenceau to his constituents of the 18e arrondissement in 1881.

1900. Unfortunately antiquity, which in a religious creed inspires faith and zeal, in a political programme provokes scepticism and indifference.

It is true that the Radicals have made certain additions to the demands formulated by the Opposition under the Empire, as, for instance, the revision of the Constitution of 1875, which could not have been asked for before that date, including the abolition of the Presidency of the Republic and of the Senate; but though these reforms have been threatened for barely twenty years the comparative freshness of the idea will not speed its fruition, and the Republic seems likely to enter the new century unshorn of its figure-head and of its Upper House. It is not suggested that the Radicals have not been in earnest, but only that they are not formidable in their Thirty Years' War against "the monarchical principle, so tenacious of life in the institutions of France."[1] In these words M. Clemenceau described the object of the campaign; and the Radical appreciation of the Republican Constitution cannot be gainsaid. It has appeared often in these pages, indicating that under the Republic France is governed under the same institutions and with almost the same limitations on liberty as were denounced by Republicans under the Second Empire; and portending, that if the French should ever again submit to the rule of an autocrat, he will find ready to hand in working order the machinery of authoritative government. The difference between my point of view and that of the Radicals is that what to them is a subject of complaint seems to me a matter on which to felicitate the French; for if the Napoleonic foundations of the State were removed or

[1] Réponse de M. Clemenceau au programme du comité radical: 1881.

unduly loosened, the whole edifice would topple down with ruin more irreparable than that caused by any revolution of the nineteenth century, which has merely displaced a dynasty or altered the name of a régime without destruction of the fabric.

The Radical programme differs from similar formularies issued in other lands by progressive politicians in that the demands set forth in it have a tendency to diminish rather than to augment. In England, where the fancy wardrobe of the Radicals yesterday will to-morrow be the ceremonial full-dress of the Conservatives, the extreme party has perpetually to invent new reforms to keep up with the enterprise of the Tories. But in France, where Conservatism is the creed of the vast majority of the inhabitants, and is thus too serious a reality to be the badge of a faction,[1] Radical reformers have an immovable wall to tilt at, which in some respects may be firmer to resist their assaults under an anonymous Republic than under a form of government with a vulnerable head. So, while all the institutions menaced by Republicans under the Second Empire survive, the abolition of one of them has practically disappeared from Radical programmes.

[1] The appropriation of the epithet "Conservateur" by the Monarchists has almost fallen into disuse, the members of the anti-Republican Right being called collectively Reactionaries or, according to their groups, Royalists, Bonapartists, etc. Excepting as a conventional term it was entirely misleading to call the Monarchists under the Republic "Conservative," for there was not a single institution desired by them to be conserved which was threatened by the great body of Republicans. The Church was the chief subject of controversy, but clerical and anti-clerical were the epithets which distinguished the attitude to it of the rival parties, as few Republicans ever advocated the abolition of the Concordat. The mere fact that the Reactionaries desired to overthrow the existing form of government hardly sufficed to give them the monopoly of the title of Conservative in a conservative country.

In 1881 M. Clemenceau accepted a vague scheme of "gradual substitution of a national militia for the standing army," but in 1885 the only reference to the military forces in the general manifesto of the Radicals of the Seine was a still vaguer reference to international arbitration. At any time M. Clemenceau's subscription to a doctrine minatory to the army of France was only a formal salute of an ancient flag — the ensign once planted, as he said, on the heights of Montmartre to defy the Empire; for he and his comrades, irreconcilable towards other institutions condemned on their programme, such as the Church, were often active in schemes for the strengthening of the permanent forces of the nation. The Radicals came to acknowledge that the state of Europe did not permit of theoretical experiments touching the military strength of France; and so to the present time their advent to office does not affect the position of the army, save in the sense that any new Minister of War may have crotchets to try during his short term of power.

It is a most remarkable outcome of the rule of democracy in France, that the one question on which practically all parties are agreed is the maintenance of armaments of overwhelming strength. It is not as though the army were only a visible institution like the Church, with which no one is compelled to come into contact, or merely an expensive establishment, the burden of which is indirectly felt in the incidence of taxation. There is scarcely a family in the land of which the interior economy is not directly disturbed by the military system. The whole manhood of France passes through the ranks, and taken from home, from bread-

winning, or from study, submits without complaint, if without enthusiasm, to a period of mechanical discipline. Universal suffrage giving its sanction to universal military service is an amazing phase of modern democratic rule. It is important to note that this general levy is made, not as in the days when France first raised a popular army, when the citizens of the First Republic with passion formed their battalions against the invader on their soil. The barracks and the camps are now filled with a young soldiery recruited from every class of the nation, unborn when the last invasion left its inexorable heritage for the generation to come. To a certain extent this deliberate call to arms of those too young to have the avenging spirit of spectators of national humiliation is a needful insurance of the commerce and resources of a country which has a menacing neighbour on its flank. But it is not sage prudence alone which impels Frenchmen of all opinions to have a mind for an impregnable army. French patriotism is a sentiment easier to recognise than to define, and the disappearance from Radical programmes of theoretical protests against the principle of a standing army is full of significance for those who try to scan the future. Significant also is the attitude of the Socialists, who now compose the Radical left wing, fain to repress their international protests at the unfraternal spectacle of a nation prepared to fight.

The mention of the Socialists, who will be dealt with presently, suggests that the Radical programme contains certain articles inspired by their doctrine, in addition to the perennial list inherited from the Republican Opposition under the Empire. They are not, however, due to any new alliance of the Radicals with the Socialists in

the Chamber. From the early days of the Republic the Extreme Left had always an economic section in its catalogue of projected reforms. From our English point of view most of the fiscal projects of the Radicals would not have been very alarming even had there been any prospect of their adoption. In the first line always came the suppression of the octroi, — the municipal tax on food, liquid and solid, generally condemned by English economists, — its place to be taken by an income-tax[1] which should be levied on some undefined progressive system. The octroi still flourishes, excepting in one or two isolated localities; and the income-tax, proportional or progressive, is still a dream of politicians, many of whom are neither Radicals nor Socialists.

The imposition of an income-tax has constantly been discussed in France,[2] but until the close of the century it has not come within the range of practical politics. In 1894 M. Cavaignac, a Republican so moderate that the previous year he was denounced by the Radicals as a Reactionary, commenced to advocate it, rejecting the Socialist theory that taxes ought so to be imposed as to level all social inequalities, but advancing the principle, accepted by cautious politicians, that the incidence of taxation should be so arranged as not to aggravate those inequali-

[1] In the later schemes laid before Parliament the proposal has been to substitute the income-tax for other forms of direct taxation, the question of the octroi not being raised, as many politicians in favour of the income-tax would hesitate before interfering with the great source of municipal revenue. But in Radical programmes the juxtaposition of "Suppression des Octrois" and "Impôt sur le revenu" is intended to give electors affected by the former the impression that they will be relieved from it by the substitution of the latter.

[2] Between 1871 and 1894 there were thirty-four projects of income-tax laid before the Legislature.

ties. The general lines of M. Cavaignac's utterances in favour of taxing incomes would have been regarded as economical commonplaces in England; but in France, that a politician of his moderation and high repute should have made them, was looked upon as an ominous accession to the forces of Radicalism. The general hostility of the French to the income-tax is primarily due to the recognition that the secretive habits of thrift practised by the people are such a source of national wealth that to disturb or to discourage them by the inquisitorial process necessary for levying the impost might produce a public disaster inconceivable in an improvident community. But while my observation leads me to believe that an income-tax is so unsuited to the French temperament that its imposition would be a mischievous error, it is none the less true that there are sober politicians in France, totally opposed to the Extreme Left on questions of government, who advocate it as a just and practicable impost, and who are in favour of its progressive assessment.

Nevertheless, as the income-tax has always been preached by the Radicals, and as it was first prominently discussed at the time when the Socialists became conspicuous in the legislature, its opponents could with show of reason treat it as an emanation of the revolutionary party. Yet in the scare which the projected tax aroused little was heard of its progressive character. What alarmed the nation was the pretension that the State had the right to lay bare the private financial situation of each tax-payer. The scheme was proposed in 1895 by the first Cabinet in the history of the Republic which claimed to be exclusively Radical. The Budget Commission, of which we have observed the

functions, illustrated their peculiarity by reporting unfavourably on a scheme for income-tax put forward by M. Doumer, the Minister of Finance, while the same Chamber, which in 1894[1] had rejected a motion approving the principle, now further displayed the incoherency of French parliamentary proceedings by adopting a resolution in favour of the system.[2] It was then that the Senate came to the rescue of the undulating Chamber, and by forcing the Radical Ministry to resign, gave the erratic deputies the chance of supporting for a season a Government described as Moderate.

The accession to office of this Moderate Cabinet, containing no minister classed as Radical, shelved the subversive policy of income-tax; but as some of its members were in favour of the principle, we have still to elucidate the meaning of moderate politicians when they say that the occupation of office by the Radicals is a danger to the commonwealth. Where does that peril lie? An examination of Radical programmes shows that the demands in them remain as unsatisfied as though the five-and-twenty Cabinets since M. Grévy became President had not abounded in Radical Ministers. The performances of the Concentration Ministries, which were said to be ruled by their Radical members, seem to justify the sarcasm applied to them to the effect that a combination of fire and water produces nothing but stream. When at last the Radicals filled all the places in a Ministry, they seized indeed the opportunity of putting forth a fiscal policy, long an article of Radical faith; but its general principle was accepted by some of the

[1] Chambre des Députés: 11 Juillet, 1894.
[2] Chambre des Députés: 26 Mars, 1896.

very Ministers who to tranquillise alarms took the place of these too ardent reformers.

No doubt if the party system existed in France, and if Ministries lasted for the duration of a Parliament, the advent to office of a Cabinet controlled by the Extreme Left would have serious results; but it is useless to speculate what the Chamber of Deputies might do if it were the House of Commons. Ministries, whether termed Moderate, Radical, or Concentration, never live long enough to leave a distinctive mark on legislation. With the exception of the reorganisation of the army, which was a national work inspiring patriotic unity, the only great policy ever carried out in the history of the Republic was the organisation of elementary education in the first days of the Grévy Presidency, which the change of Ministries did not interrupt; and though the secular and gratuitous principle imparted to it was an article of the Radical programme, it was supported by Republicans of every group, who thus retorted on the clericals for their efforts to overturn the Republic. It is true that the intolerant application of the law, as well as some of its severer provisions, vexed many Liberals of the Left Centre; but the most rigid antagonists of ecclesiastical pretensions were MM. Jules Ferry and Gambetta, who were not Radicals in the French sense of the term, both having become high-handed statesmen of the type denounced by the Extreme Left as "men of government."

The close scrutiny of Ministers styled Radical does not convince a spectator that they are more likely to ill-govern the country than their colleagues or successors who call themselves Opportunist or Moderate. M. Brisson has

been perhaps the most conspicuous Radical since M. Clemenceau quitted public life. He has been Prime Minister, President of the Chamber, as well as candidate for the Presidency of the Republic, and his integrity is respected by his opponents. Some of them, however, criticise his "Jacobin spirit," but this would only seem to mean that if the Chamber of Deputies had had the powers of the Convention, M. Brisson would have sent to the guillotine all the Gambettists and the Ferryists, until his own head had been removed by M. Clemenceau; or else it signifies that were M. Brisson absolute master of France he would abolish the clergy, and make other public arrangements agreeable to his theories. But we have not to deal with what a man might have done in the Revolution, or what he might do under circumstances never to arise; and the stranger who studies French politics cannot see why the respectable M. Brisson, who presides over the Chamber and calls himself a Radical, is more harmful to the State than the respectable M. Loubet, who calls himself a Moderate and presides over the Senate. It is true that foreigners cannot always detect distinctions in national life most apparent to native eyes. For example, in the British Islands, where religion and not politics induces the group system, an acute and conscientious observer like M. Taine could not discern the difference between the United Presbyterian and the Free Church of Scotland; and later, less discriminating French deputies describe the English missionaries in Madagascar as Methodists, though none of them belong to the persuasions so denominated.

The dreaded Radical Ministry, which caused loud commotion during its brief existence, on analysis does not

seem to have been composed of very dangerous elements. Its president, M. Bourgeois, who had held portfolios in several colourless cabinets, was a former Préfet who, it is said, was confidentially noted at the Ministry of the Interior as an official of reactionary leanings. M. Cavaignac, already mentioned, was a politician of such moderation and high character that to a stranger it seems a pity that few of his type are found in ministries. M. Lockroy, a member of several cabinets, is better known as the kinsman of Victor Hugo and an artistic man of letters, than as an extreme politician. M. Guyot-Dessaigne, like certain statesmen of other Republican groups, had once been a devoted functionary of the Empire. M. Ricard, a thriving leader of the bar at Rouen, was not regarded in that calm city as a fire-brand. M. Berthelot, like M. Paul Bert and other men of science, was an advanced anti-clerical, but his opinions on social questions were less dogmatic. Most of the names, indeed, conveyed the idea of periodical office-holding rather than of inflammatory policy, but one of the new men deserves a word of mention. On M. Doumer, the Minister of Finance who had propounded the fiscal scheme of his Government, the hopes of his group were fixed when turned out of place; but while he was preparing to fight the good fight on the eve of a session, his Moderate rivals laid hands on him, and, taking the view expressed in these pages, that between a Radical and an Opportunist as an instrument of government there is no appreciable difference, made him Governor of Indo-China. His colleagues of the Extreme Left cried treason, and the Boulevards sneered, as the bicentenary of Dupleix was raising the problem of the best means of recovering for France an empire in the East:

while the Moderate Ministry might have despatched its Radical satrap with the valediction —

Solventur risu tabulae, tu missus abibis.

We must renounce also the theory that a Radical ministry is dangerous, because of the opinions on social questions cherished by its members in spite of their mild disposition. No one has repudiated more explicitly than M. Bourgeois the Socialist creed. After the fall of his ministry, when unfettered by office, he might have had some excuse for paying court to the group which had upheld it in the Chamber; but in reply to one of its supporters, M. Millerand, a conspicuous Socialist member for Paris, who had recently declared that "the only genuine Socialists are the Collectivists," the Radical leader retorted, "I am not a Collectivist, for there is no agreement possible between the French Revolution and the ideas of the Collectivists, which are un-French in their origin."[1]

Nor is the treatment of the Church more rigorous under a Radical ministry than at other times. There are, indeed, Radicals and Socialists whose hatred for Christianity, or for all religion, is a malign passion far more intolerant than any form of philosophic anti-clericalism. But anti-clericalism itself is out of fashion in France, and a Radical minister to please his most fanatical followers could not go so far as in the days when the clerical encroachments of the Seize Mai drove even Liberals into a persecuting mood. On the other hand, a Moderate Cabinet will encourage by the bestowal of honours the intolerance of an anti-clerical tyrant in the provinces in the hope

[1] Discours à Melun, 25 Mai, 1896.

of gaining his electoral support, or as Moderate Minister of Public Worship, wishing not to be denounced by Radicals as a Clerical, will assume an attitude to the dignitaries of the Church which is revolting to a spectator ignorant of reasons of state which should permit a young politician to insult an aged fellow-citizen. That the pretensions of the clergy have sometimes to be checked by the Government is admissible; but the public letters addressed by ministers, Moderate as well as Radical, to archbishops and bishops deemed to have infringed some article of the Concordat, are documents of which the authors ought to be ashamed. After all, a venerable prelate is a Frenchman usually looked up to with reverence and respect by a number of the French population, and this is a rare experience for a minister of the Republic who, when he turns the offensive phrase of menace or of reprimand, perhaps compares himself with Napoleon taking to task Pope Pius VII. To the outside world it only suggests that a commonplace politician is doing homage to his anti-clerical critics.

Another peril said to be likely to arise from a Radical ministry is the possibility of conflicts with the Senate; but they have arisen under governments of all hues, and the one most placidly regarded by the nation was that provoked by the Bourgeois Cabinet. We may pass to the most valid objection to the occupation of office by ministers representing exclusively the groups of the Extreme Left, which is made by moderate men who are not place-hunters, and are therefore impartial witnesses on the question why it is less desirable that one set of ineffective politicians rather than another should have the administration of the country in their hands. The objec-

tion is not one which would occur to those who have studied parliamentary institutions only in the land of their birth. It is that the administrative patronage in the hands of French ministers is so vast, and the centralised government controlled by their nominees is so powerful, that a cabinet compelled to favour the party of disorder may, by placing its agents in positions of authority all over the country, bring the State to great peril. If a Radical ministry, completely in the hands of the Socialist group, could remain long enough in power, it might deliver the nation to anarchy. We have seen how under the parliamentary system the enormous administrative patronage has fallen into the hands of members of Parliament, and how the Préfets and other powerful functionaries may feel that an influential deputy is their master rather than the Minister. If a Radical ministry at the orders of the Socialists were thus to pack the administrative service, the judiciary and the police with agents of the party of disorder, civil war would ensue. One can imagine what would be the effect if the Préfet of Police were at the orders of the members for Paris, or if Socialists were installed at the prefectures of all the industrial departments where strikes sometimes take the semblance of insurrections under the glowing eloquence of professors and journalists who sit on the Extreme Left benches of the Chamber. No doubt, to lovers of representative government it is sad that the deputies for Paris and other populous centres should see their constituents administered by unsympathetic officials. But the student of French institutions has to remark many anomalies which arise from the ill-assorted marriage of the native centralised machine and the foreign parliamentary system. One result of the

incompatibility is the special signification acquired by the term Radical under the Republic. We have seen that in political doctrine there is little diversity between the Radicals and Republicans otherwise designated: but the latter proclaim their distinctive mark to be that they are "men of government," having no commerce with the party of disorder and of social disintegration. How long they will be able effectively to abide on the path of governmental discipline, or to persuade the nation of their capability to keep order, will depend on the nature of the vicissitudes, exterior and domestic, in store for France.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOCIALIST GROUP

THE philosophy and tenets of French Socialism; the enumeration of its sects and their rivalries; the attitude of various categories of the population on social questions; all these subjects I hope to study in another work which will treat of economics and the relations of capital with labour. Here we have only to do with the Socialists in their parliamentary capacity, to observe their general policy and demeanour, and to see how it is likely to influence the solution of the problem of government in France.

The General Election of 1893 was the first at which the Socialists formed a distinct political party, they having in the previous year made a preliminary reconnaissance at the renewal of the Municipal Councils. The moment was favourable for the organisation of a group appealing to the discontented in the nation. The Boulangist army, through the ranks of which most of them had passed, was disbanded. Its discomfiture and the interference of the Pope had disorganised the Reactionaries, and in certain regions which had been their strongholds a number of votes were transferred from the Extreme Right to the Extreme Left. The most potent, however, of the causes

to aid the new group at the polls was perhaps the Panama scandal, which brought discredit on important Republican groups, and was moreover turned to profit by Socialist leaders who with bold ingenuity suggested that "Panamist" and Capitalist were synonymous terms.

The Socialists made a boisterous entry into the parliamentary system, somewhat out of proportion to the suffrages they obtained. About five per cent of the votes on the register, and about eight per cent of the votes recorded[1] were given to their candidates throughout France; but as Paris furnished nearly a third of their supporters it was clear that the provinces were not carried away by the new movement. Nevertheless, the result was momentous in bringing into the disorganised Chamber over thirty determined politicians, who, representing several sects, knew how to sink their domestic differences when face to face with the undisciplined majority. These occupants of the benches on the Extreme Left did not compose a new party suddenly brought into being by the discontents of the moment. The Socialist label was fresh; but the deputies strongly resembled previous occupants of those seats who, in the past, had helped the Reactionaries to abbreviate the term of ministries, and some of the members now returned under the new desig-

[1] If the Radical-Socialists be reckoned with the Socialists who repudiate any qualifying epithet, about eight per cent of the total votes on the register, and eleven per cent of the total votes recorded, were given throughout France to the candidates of the united groups. But many Radical Socialists decline to be classed as Socialists, although on the other hand there are Radicals not ranked as Radical-Socialists, such as M. Pelletan, who work in close alliance with extreme Socialists like MM. Jaurès and Guesde. The distinctions between French parliamentary groups are often obscure, and in Paris the most observant expert has difficulty in distinguishing between a Radical-Socialist and a Socialist without epithet.

nation had sat before as Radical-Socialists, Boulangists, or Revisionists.

As for the electors, a study of the regions where they gave the most votes to the new group seems to show that the support accorded to Socialism in the provinces has not much reference to geographical position or industrial occupation. The provincial electorate which gave the largest proportion of votes to the Socialists was that of the Cher, an agricultural department. Its most populous place is Bourges, a city of 45,000 inhabitants, which travellers associate less with modern phases of politics than with the sumptuous splendour of a noble church, redolent of the age when the social question was regulated by the power which raised its stately walls. In that constituency, which contains a Government arsenal and some porcelain works, the Socialists had a large minority; and in the next division, which, chiefly rural, includes Vierzon, a railway centre given to strikes, they carried a Communard of local origin. At the other end of the department a sitting deputy, previously classed in another group, was on his re-election counted as a Socialist.

As one explores the byways of this central region of France, which from the Berry to the other end of Burgundy is wont to elect deputies of impassioned opinions, one is struck with the profound stillness of the villages as well as of the country-side. To the passer-by it seems as though the silent land were peopled by a race of as sluggish tradition as the long-submissive rustics of England. But the old ploughman guiding the oxen, and his neighbour trimming the vines, are the grandsons of the men who burned the châteaux and sacked the

churches a year or two after Arthur Young rode this way noting the causes about to enkindle the peasantry. The spirit then aroused lingers still. The owner of a scrap of ground asked to vote for a politician put forward by the organisations of the local towns would bid the candidate begone if he accosted him with a scheme of land-nationalisation; yet he might vote for its promoter if it were wrapped in a programme of Revolution, which word has no sound of horror for him.

Across the Loire in the Nièvre the proportion of the electorate returned as having voted Socialist is comparatively small, though it is a department where any cause is popular which represents discontent. It thus became Boulangist, and when that movement was ended it re-elected most of its "Revisionist" deputies as members of various Republican groups, Moderate as well as Radical. Further east the department of Saône-et-Loire is also interesting to examine. It contains the fine grazing region of the Charollais, the wine-growing country around Macon, and a great coal-basin which employs the majority of the electors in two constituencies. Neither Boulangism nor Socialism ever found a footing here, though at Montcean-les-Mines dynamite was first used in France as a political argument. The electoral tone of the department is Radical of the shade which supports "Concentration" Ministries; but one of the industrial constituencies returns a Monarchist. The colliers and iron-workers of Le Creuzot, in sending to the Chamber their anti-Republican employer, do not, however, signify that there is a solitary population in Burgundy ready to die for the Duc d'Orléans, but only that here the relations of capital and labour are of a paternal character.

It would need a special monograph to analyse the electoral tendencies of the French populations according to locality; but before the interesting work was completed it might lose its value, as some movement unconnected with the social question, or with the doctrine professed by any existing political group, suddenly sweeping France like a whirlwind, might leave the monographist, with his conclusions, disconcerted. As we have sufficiently seen that in the midland region the manifestation of Socialism is intermittent, we will go to another part of the country where the conditions are different. The centre of France, from the Berry to the valley of the Saône, is a great rural area dotted with industrial districts, so far from one another that they affect the general character of the population almost as little as they deface the landscape. In contrast to this, on the north-eastern frontier the two most populous of all the provincial departments present, in parts, an aspect approaching that of some of our manufacturing and mining counties in England. In portions of the Nord and of the Pas de Calais clusters of busy towns join one another, mingling their smoke; and these are the two departments where the Socialists have, outside the capital, the greatest numerical support at the polls, though the proportion of their votes to the electorate is less than in the rural Cher. Another diversity between this region and central France is that there the population is anti-clerical in tendency, while here in Flanders and Artois it is generally religious. Thus, while the Church was yet a monarchical agency, at the elections of 1885, the two north-eastern departments sent a solid phalanx of Reactionaries to the Chamber, the Nord returning twenty and the Pas de

Calais twelve members pledged to overturn the Republic, which had not a single deputy to support it from this industrial region. Three years later the electors of the Nord changed the note of their hostility to the Republic by choosing General Boulanger at a bye-election with 170,000 votes, but with his downfall the Reactionaries lost their predominance in the north-east. In the reorganisation of parties neither in the Nord nor in the Pas de Calais did the Socialists carry many seats in 1893. One of the members for Lille and two for Bethune were alone classed in their group, but the 90,000 votes distributed among their candidates in the two departments were significant in this important region where the Socialists were taking possession of the municipal councils of some of the biggest and richest towns in France. The subject of Socialist municipalities cannot be dealt with here, but it may be noted that the province wherein their rise has caused most alarm is not the home of an electorate which has long had a tendency to Radicalism, whereof Socialism is sometimes considered the development.

In other industrial regions the same intermittent features are observed. The department of the Loire, which contains St. Étienne and Roanne, has a Socialist electorate proportionately much larger than that of the neighbouring Rhône, which consists of Lyons and its dependencies.[1] The same phenomenon is repeated farther

[1] One of the more obvious reasons is that St. Étienne and Roanne are inhabited almost exclusively by working-class populations, whereas that of Lyons is composed of many diverse elements. But Lyons presents social features so remarkable as to make it one of the most interesting cities of Europe to study, and to generalise upon it would be misleading. I hope, however, to deal with it on a future occasion.

south. In the Tarn, where the chief result of the strikes of Carmaux has been the invention of M. Jaurès, Socialism is a political force, while it has little electoral importance in the adjacent coal-field of the Aveyron with its turbulent miners of Decazeville. In other districts of the south, where labour troubles are rarer, the Socialist vote may be referred to that meridional exuberance which in the private relations of life finds an outlet in loud words and violent gestures. Whatever the genesis of Socialism in other latitudes, it is not a scientific philosophy in the south of France. It is cultivated by the same type of citizens who appear sometimes in one of those amazing trials for electoral corruption which the whole community seems to enjoy as a roistering farce, or who threaten insurrection when a bull-fight is stopped. To popularise the Socialists under the sun of Provence and Gascony it is enough for them to be denounced as the party of disorder; for liberty in the eyes of the Southerner is not the power to change the law, but the faculty of breaking it. It is said that serious apostles of German Socialism who have ventured into France are as shocked at the trifling of their joyous brethren of Toulouse and Marseilles as was Robespierre, grim product of the fogs of the north, at the lightsome enjoyment of the Revolution displayed by Barras of the Var and his compatriots.

The Socialism of one great southern city cannot be ascribed to this quality. At Bordeaux, where the party makes an outward show of progress, the inhabitants, though given to all the genial amenities of life, are not expansive or effervescent like their Gascon neighbours. The Bordelais attribute their unexaggerated temperament to the Plantagenet occupation of Guienne when the race

[illegible]

[illegible] that serious element of the

[illegible] the rural department of the Gers.

in population barely equal to the city of Bordeaux, its chief town Auch, though the seat of an archbishop, being little bigger than a village. For a long time its deputies and senators were nearly all Reactionaries, mostly Bonapartist like M. Paul de Cassagnac, who was its member for seventeen years. When the Republicans took this Imperialist stronghold it was noticed that the Socialists had become a voting force, and later, at the senatorial elections in 1897, it presented the unique phenomenon of being the only department in France returning none but Radical-Socialist senators, representing ideas which at the Luxembourg are relatively as extreme as those of the most ardent revolutionaries in the Chamber. This is another example of the Socialists gaining a footing in an electorate which previously had lent its forces to a Reactionary party pledged to overturn the Republic. So many regions, which, in the last decade of the century, have given suffrages to Socialism, had been in the previous ten years Bonapartist or Clerical, Boulangist or Royalist, that it would seem that the Socialist vote in France is rather an expression of discontent or of disorder than a serious evolution towards collectivist doctrine.

The attitude of the peasantry to that doctrine in the Gers or elsewhere can be noticed only incidentally here; but a few words ought to be said on the apparent anomaly of small proprietors, avid of the soil, voting for advocates of its nationalisation. The inconsistency of voting for a Monarchical candidate at one election, and for a Republican at the next, is explicable, as the elector may have no rooted prejudice in favour of the principle advocated by either; but that a peasant, with his craving for land, should support a politician who

would destroy private ownership in real estate, does not seem reasonable. An explanation is that the Socialist, far from trying to teach the small cultivator that he would be happier as tenant of the State than tilling his own plot, appeals to his ruling passion. To the owner of the tiny scrap of ground he points out the bigger holding of his neighbour, which would have to be shared between the two if the Socialist doctrine were put in practice; and this primitive fallacy is said to have a certain effect on peasants, who know nothing of politics but who care a great deal for land.

Another cause of the growth of the Socialist vote is the depopulation of rural France. This great evil, probably the most serious which the nation has to face, graver than any question of government or of politics, has a twofold phase. First there is the unnatural decrease in the birth-rate, whereof the chief danger feared shows that Malthus never anticipated the system of universal conscription, under which the very existence of a nation might depend on the maintenance of its manhood on numerical equality with that of its neighbour across the frontier. The peasants' determination not to have many children, primarily due to the testamentary law which enforces the division of property among offspring, has become a habit, and has encouraged the idea that the land is incapable of supporting even those who already dwell upon it. Thus an impulse, new in France, and less pressing there than in other countries, is given to that migration of rustics to the towns which afflicts all modern communities. The peasants who join the urban population find life harder in the streets than in the fields, and it is not surprising if they adhere to

doctrines which promise to remedy their disillusions. In nearly three-fourths of the departments of France the population is decreasing ; [1] and within them an interior migration takes place, the rural areas sending their natives, who do not depart to great cities far away, to attenuate the resources of the country towns, and to import into them an element of discontent. This may account for some of the Socialist votes in certain departments which contain no industrial centres. But the migration from villages to towns within the same department, or from rural districts to industrial centres in the provinces, is trifling compared to the movement towards Paris. The last census returns of the ninteenth century displaying the wide-spread decrease of the birth-rate are full of ominous significance for the future of France. The increase of the entire population was faintly perceptible, being 175,000 in five years, and this was more than accounted for by Paris and its suburbs, which in 1896 had 200,000 more inhabitants than in 1891.

Not that the influx of provincials to the capital affects the spirit of its electorate, except in so far as the immigration of workmen in search of employ increases the discon-

[1] In 1896 only 24 departments were increasing in population, while 63 were diminishing, the situation having been just reversed in ten years, as in 1886 there were 58 in which the population was growing. It is impossible to generalise on the subject, or to associate in all cases political sentiment with this phenomenon, as in the localities where population continues to grow the increase is by no means everywhere due to immigration. In Finistère and the Morbihan, for example, there is a high birth-rate owing to the influence of the Church. Five of the departments on the Eastern frontier show an increase, and only one of them is essentially industrial in character, though in the others the rise of manufacturing towns is one of the consequences of the annexation to Germany of Alsace and Lorraine, French industries in those provinces having been removed within the new frontier.

[illegible] Whatever the tradition and sentiment of the provinces, Paris retains its revolutionary tradition, and its influence in the country of that commanding city is somewhat anomalous. No metropolis since the days of antiquity ever had such a sway, moral and intellectual as well as administrative, over a nation, and the centralised system was not artificially imposed on an unwilling people, but grew up with the predominance of the capital. Nevertheless, France has rarely accepted the political lead of Paris. The history of a century has illustrated that proposition from Thermidor, when Robespierre found vain the shelter of the Hôtel de Ville and the protection of the Commune, to the Coup d'État of Louis Bonaparte, when the nation condoned the shooting down of the politicians of the boulevards. Again, when the revived Commune set fire to the city of its birth as a spectacle for the victorious Germans, the trouble had little echo in the country, considering the efforts of the International and of the emissaries of the capital to inflame Lyons, Marseilles, and other centres where there is always an insurrectionary element;[1] and throughout the duration of the Republic the political opinion of the provinces has never for a moment followed that of the Parisian electorate. Once the capital obeyed the lead of the provincial democracy. When General Boulanger had been acclaimed by the suffrages of successive departments, Paris elected him too with a gigantic vote; but it seemed as though the voice of the capital were sufficient to condemn a cause, for at the general elections the same year, while the volatile city remained partially true to its latest idol when

[1] Enquête parlementaire sur l'Insurrection du 18 Mars; Rapports de MM. les Premiers Présidents de Cours d'Appel.

shattered, the rest of the nation turned its back upon him, and the metropolitan members composed one-half of the Boulangist faction in the Chamber of 1889.

If the capital and the country marched in unison, the preponderance of the Socialists in the electorate of Paris would be more momentous, for they outnumber all the other groups put together, including the Radicals.[1] If the great mass of Parisians, who by their votes profess adherence to Socialism, composed an army of earnest enthusiasts impelled by reflection and experience to demand the reorganisation of society, or even if they were directed by grave leaders, convinced of the scientific truth of definite doctrines, then the prospect of social and fiscal changes would be imminent. But the Socialist electorate of Paris is feared not as a serious section of the democracy, determined on organic reform, but as the inconstant party of disorder bent on revolution; they are the Internationalists of the Commune and the Boulangists of yesterday, not pursuing one steady doctrinal aim, but ready to join any movement which will lead to fighting in the street.

It is not their critics who traduce them as the successors of the men of the Commune; it is their own loudest boast that they are the successors of the incendiaries of the Tuileries and of the assassins of the Archbishop and the other hostages. Every year, when

[1] At the elections of 1893 in Paris 220,000 votes were recorded for Socialist and Radical-Socialist candidates, the latter, who are hardly distinguishable from the former in the capital, obtaining 45,000. The Radicals, Moderate Republicans, Ralliés, and Reactionaries obtained 190,000, of which 112,000 were given to Radical candidates, many of whom were not far removed from Socialism. There were also 32,000 votes given to Revisionist candidates, relics of Boulangism, at least half of which may be reckoned as belonging to the party of disorder.

the 18th of March comes round, the Socialists of various sects glorify the Commune. One of its old members, M. Vaillant, Socialist deputy for the Charonne division,[1] which gave notice to Gambetta that the electors of Paris were no longer with him, said, in celebrating the twenty-fourth anniversary of 1871: "The working classes throughout the world felt as though a blow had fallen on them when the Commune fell, and henceforth growing in the popular imagination the Commune has become for them the image of the future which they have to conquer." On the same occasion M. Sembat, deputy for Montmartre where the murder of Generals Le Comte and Clément Thomas was the opening act of the insurrection, wrote, "The Commune was a paroxysm of generous fury"; and another writer in the official organ of the Socialist party declared that "The Commune supplied the irrefutable proof that the morrow of a revolution might be awaited without disquietude."[2]

It is important to notice that the Parisian Socialists of the end of the century unite in approving the acts of the Commune, for that movement, after the fall of the Empire, was by no means identified with Socialism. In our country the opposite impression is current, because English writers, many of whom ought to know better, apply the term Communist, which has a definite meaning

[1] At the General Election of 1881, little more than a year before his death, Gambetta was candidate for two of the divisions of the 20th arrondissement, and at Charonne he was practically defeated, not obtaining an absolute majority, and declining to submit to a second ballot. He had been returned by the first division, but not by a vast majority, and his lukewarm treatment in a quarter distinguished by many of his celebrated speeches showed that he had parted company with the Radicalism of Paris.

[2] *Petite République*, 18 Mars, 1905.

both in our language and in French, to the Commune of Paris, with which it has no other connection than an accidental assonance.[1] But the error is more confusing than the mere misuse of a term, as among the members of the Commune there were Communists, just as there were Freemasons[2] and adherents of other sects which had primarily nothing to do with its aims. Its fundamental doctrine was merely the absolute autonomy all over France of the administrative areas called Communes. The chief theoretical objection to it is not the introduction of a wide system of local government in a country

[1] The French term "Communiste," like its English equivalent Communist, signifies a person who believes in the community of goods and desires the abolition of private property. The word "Collectiviste," more in use at the present day, was described at the inquiry into the Insurrection of the 18th of March, as defining "Communiste honteux." At all events "communiste" is derived from "commun," and has nothing whatever to do with the administrative term "Commune," though of course the words have the same Latin root. There are several adjectives and substantives which have come into the French language to designate the uprising of 1871, and the persons who took part in it. "Communard" is the most frequently used, and it might well be adopted in English to take the place of the misleading Communist. It is generally used by adversaries of the movement. Its defenders seem to prefer "Communeux," which Littré says is also used as a term of disparagement, but it is found in the Socialist journals in their praises of the Commune in such phrases as "La grandeur de la Révolution Communeuse." "Communaliste" is also sometimes used. Unlettered French people during the siege used to apply the epithet Communiste to the members of the Commune, just as educated Englishmen do. This use of it occurs in one of M. Ludovic Halévy's sketches describing the siege, and he informed me it was constantly used by the same class of the populace which spoke of the *armistice* as the *amnistie*, suggesting the penal vicissitudes which they or their friends had undergone. It is possible that the English association of Communism with revolutionary outbreaks in Paris was originally a reminiscence of 1848, when the Communists played a certain part in the insurrectionary movements.

[2] Enquête parlementaire sur l'Insurrection du 18 Mars; Déposition de M. Floquet.

used to centralisation, but the tremendous power which its adoption would give to the incendiary inhabitants of Paris, who would, with it, constitute a revolutionary empire within the State. There were Communist Socialists opposed to the Commune, while some of its most ardent defenders were the adversaries of Communism, which they said had been forced into France by the influence of foreign delegates whom the French revolutionaries met at the congresses of the International.[1] Thus the Socialists who laud the proceedings of the Commune after the lapse of a quarter of a century, do so, not because of their zeal for local autonomy, or because of the association of collectivist ideas with the rising of 1871; they extol the Commune simply as the ensign of an insurrectionary movement which they would like to see repeated for their own purposes.

The complete harmony between the men of the Commune and the Socialists of the end of the century might be ascribed to evolution of opinion, impelling sincere revolutionaries to adopt one another's programmes, did not the interlude of Boulangism destroy the plausible theory. A military adventurer, who never, when he was protected by the Radicals, professed either autonomic or collectivist tenets, touched the fancy of the public, and after he had been openly proclaimed by the Reactionaries

[1] The evidence given before the Commission of the National Assembly on the Insurrection of the Commune contains much testimony like the following: "Nous avons pu remarquer qu'en Angleterre, en Allemagne, en Suisse, en Belgique, partout où des groupes d'ouvriers se forment, la tendance est communiste. La France seule envoya dans le congrès (1867) des délégués qui protestèrent contre les idées communistes." Enquête sur le 18 Mars; Déposition de M. Tolain. (M. Tolain was an active member of the International.)

as their instrument to restore monarchical government in France, the Socialists of Paris with one great voice elected him their member, and were nearly the means of establishing a dictatorship. A Radical candidate was proposed by the Government to catch the anti-clerical vote of the democracy: a Socialist trade-unionist came forward in the interests of the working class. But the proletariat of Paris scented revolution in the air, and thought that General Boulanger on his black horse would lead them to the attack of the existing order of things. So they forgot the doctrines of the Commune and of Collectivism, and intimated to the unadventurous adventurer that when he was ready to lead the insurrection, the party of disorder, two hundred thousand strong, was ready to follow him.[1]

This attitude of the Socialists to a potential military dictator must be carefully noted. It shows first that the Socialist democracy of Paris is willing to throw to the winds every article in its programme for the sake of procuring a revolution, without reflection as to its ultimate results. It also throws light on the foreboding of those who think that the growth of Socialism may drive the nation to take refuge in Cæsarism. The fear of the advance of the party of disorder, in the face of parlia-

[1] This election for Paris in January, 1889, being held before the abolition of scrutin-de-liste, which it hastened, was participated in by the entire capital. In spite of the strongest official pressure in favour of M. Jacques, the Radical candidate of the Government, General Boulanger received 244,000 votes against 162,000 given to M. Jacques, while the Socialist polled only 16,900. Of the Boulangist majority it is impossible that more than 30,000 were reactionary votes, and to ascribe 200,000 of them to the Socialist and Revolutionary electors is certainly a moderate calculation. These figures may be instructively compared with the classification of Parisian voters in 1893 given in a previous note on page 475.

mentary anarchy, might impel the bourgeoisie and the peasantry into acclaiming a saviour, if a popular hero were forthcoming; but if he touched the public fancy the Revolutionaries also might join in the acclamation, as they did at the Boulangist epoch. The dread of Socialism was one of the potent causes to drive France into the arms of Louis Napoleon; but his struggle with the democracy of Paris was very short, and three weeks after he had swept the boulevards with his cannon and his musketry, the working men of the capital made little protest at the plebiscite which condoned the Coup d'État. Thus, an uncompromising enemy of the régime, M. Jules Favre, in his opposition to it used to throw in the teeth of the working classes the reproach that they were responsible for the deeds of the Empire, — they who had made it.[1]

The attitude of the Socialists in Parliament and the language of their press does not dispel the idea that revolutionary disorder, and not social reform, is the end of the party. In spite of the insurrectionary tendencies of the democracy of Paris and of other centres, if the Socialist movement had produced political leaders of lucid aims and of sober resoluteness, the wayward passions of the people might have been organised into a force capable of compelling a solution of certain social problems which confront all modern communities, though they are probably less pressing in France than elsewhere. But the endeavour of the politicians seems to be to aggravate the incoherency of the populace in order to dissimulate

[1] "Messieurs les ouvriers, vous seuls avez fait l'Empire: à vous seuls de le défaire." Jules Favre. — *Manifestation du Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle après la bataille de Mentana*, 4 Novembre, 1867.

their own; nor do they impress the world with their sensibility to the real sufferings of the people who toil, and a stranger, bent on studying the subject with open mind, will not derive much aid from the official press of the party.

The *Petite République* for several years was, as it boasted, the only daily organ of the entire Socialist party. Its articles were signed by all the conspicuous deputies of the party, by eminent municipal councillors of Paris, and by the chiefs of its sects, including MM. Jaurès, Guesde, Brousse, and Allemane, but its perusal, far from affording some definite idea of what these philosophers wanted, only gave the general idea that they had a revolution in view. Week after week, with rare exceptions, the leading articles were not to be distinguished from those printed in other violent journals of every shade of politics. The iniquities of ministers of the Republic were more often the subject of attack than the inequalities in the lot of its citizens; and on such occasions it was instructive to cut out and compare in parallel columns the diatribes of the Socialist and anti-clerical *Petite République*, of the anti-Semitic and Catholic *Libre Parole*, of the Imperialist *Autorité*, and of the *Intransigeant*, which represents the special tenets of M. Henri Rochefort. An expert in the styles of the boulevards would at once recognise the invective of that storm-tossed nobleman, the favourite epithets of M. Paul de Cassagnac, or the more sonorous abuse of M. Drumont; but, in pondering the substance of the essays which display to France the volcanic beauties of unlicensed printing, the unlearned would not detect that one of them was the voice of the inspired organ of

social reform. Its other pages might contain a paragraph relating to a strike at Carmaux, or a congress at Marseilles, such as would appear in other morning journals, from which its record of news would differ only in its announcements of a meeting of the "League for promoting Atheism" at Belleville, or an account of a "Civil Baptism" at Montmartre[1] — chronicles agreeable to the anti-clerical reader, but having little pertinence to Collectivism or other social doctrines.

What distinguished it from other vehement journals, Republican or Reactionary, was its publication, unabridged, of speeches made by Socialist leaders at banquets or in Parliament, and the perusal of the latter leads us to consider the position and action of the party in the legislature. To a stranger who frequents the Chamber the difference between the Socialist deputies and other members of Parliament is not striking. This is not surprising, as of the former, those who have been longest in the House have previously sat in other groups; while they, as well as their younger colleagues, belong by origin to the same class as the majority of deputies — that is to say, they are chiefly journalists, professors, or lawyers. Thus the reproach sometimes thrown at the Socialists by Moderate Republicans, that they are professional politicians, can be equally applied to those who make it; but a juster criticism of the group is that, considering its popular pretensions, rare in it are the

[1] The following is a typical example of such announcements in the *Petite République:* "Société de Baptême civil et de propagande d'athéisme. — Maison du Peuple. La Société organise un orchestre destiné à prendre part aux fêtes anticléricales. Elle adresse un chaleureux appel à tous les musiciens socialistes. Écrire, pour tout ce qui concerne la Société, au citoyen A. Létrillard, secrétaire général."

representatives of labour who have ever earned a livelihood by manual toil. As to the demeanour of the Socialists in the pursuit of their legislative duties, it is not much more boisterous than that of other deputies who are not of the party of violence. There are Reactionaries at the other end of the Chamber who contest the uproarious superiority of the Extreme Left, and, what is more notable, the Royalists sometimes give tongue loudest to foment the eloquence of a Socialist. The sight of Monarchists, from the Vendée and Brittany, cheering the utterances of a Revolutionary attacking the Government, is instructive to those who have studied the history of parties under the Republic, particularly at the epoch of Boulangism.

In justice it must be said that all the harangues of the Socialists do not incite the applause of the Reactionaries. The Church is so often the object of their rage that the Abbé Lemire, a deputy for the Nord, who, though classed as a Catholic Republican, is to a certain extent a Christian Socialist, once remarked to his colleagues, whose Socialism is not thus qualified, that their anti-clerical zeal drove into a secondary place in their minds all conception of social reform. In the Revolution, of which one of the chief bases was the principle of individual ownership, the confiscation of the possessions of the Church in 1789 is one of the rare acts which the Socialists like to quote, as by false analogy they treat it as a nationalisation of private property. But though almost the sole encouragement which modern Collectivists find in the Revolution was its dispossession of the clergy, there is no natural connection whatever between anti-clerical sentiment and Socialist doctrine. The latter,

indeed, is as abundant in the New Testament as it is inexistent in the Declaration of the Rights of Man. A Socialist has as much right to be an anti-clerical as he has to be a vegetarian, but neither quality increases the authenticity of his Socialism; and the prominence which the group professing it gives to its intolerant hate of religion is another of the many proofs that the chief aim of French Socialists is not the adjustment of economic inequalities to procure the greater happiness of mankind, but the subversion of society and of all existing institutions valued by any section of it.

To some of the propositions given forth by Socialist orators at the tribune no exception can be taken, but their conclusions are vague when they are not inconsequent. It is always a pleasure to hear M. Jaurès, whose eloquence is in the Chamber second only to that of M. de Mun; but that truant from the Left Centre might be persuasive if he were only lucid. His exposition of a theme is often masterly; his images are magnificent; his rhetoric is of classic form worthy of a brilliant pupil of the École Normale, and his hearers feel themselves elevated with him into a lofty atmosphere. He takes them, indeed, up into an exceeding high mountain, but from the summit he shows them only an expanse of mist, amid which phantoms and confused figures flit. His arraignment of the public corruption which arose out of the Panama affair was in some respects admirable; but because politicians of the same social class as M. Jaurès had been tempted by the facilities offered by the parliamentary system to rob a commercial enterprise, it was not easy to prove that the practical remedy for such evils is the transformation of all private capital into one unique collective capital. His

attack some years later on the sugar-bounties, in its exposure of the defects of the costly protective policy, was a tribute to his training in the school of which M. Léon Say was the recognised master. The splendour of the historical châteaux purchased by sugar-refiners, the triumphs of their racing-stables, and the prodigal exploits of their progeny do not console the French consumer for the dearness of his sugar. But it is a difficult task for a State socialist to disparage the practices of a Protectionist Government, for their first principles are identical;[1] so M. Jaurès, unable to bring his thesis to its logical conclusion, that Free Trade is beneficial for an industrial nation, had nothing better to propose as a substitute for bounties than a nebulous scheme of State monopoly of the sugar industry.

Sometimes when the Socialist leader is among his constituents he reveals his consciousness of the vanity of expounding economical doctrines, or even of wrapping them in sophistry. Then when the banquet is ended, and ardent words have inflamed men's fancies, as it is so easy to do in popular assemblies in a land of revolution, the refined philosopher who has modelled his artificial style on Isocrates, and has trained his intellect, to little purpose indeed, in the dialectic of Aristotle, has no better exhortation, from ancient or modern science, to give his humble disciples waiting to be taught than, "Dansons la Carmagnole! vive le son du canon!" Thus is the aim of the Socialist movement in France, a century after the Terror, indicated and summed up by its most authoritative leader. The dancers who invented the

[1] "Les protectionistes sont des socialistes qui ont cinquante mille francs de rente." — Bastiat.

Carmagnole in 1792, and the grim musicians who piped to them, had no thought of State socialism, or of Collectivism, or of any of the official creeds which are vaguely professed in the Extreme Left of the Chamber under the Third Republic. His evocation of the cannon to accompany the measure having been misunderstood, M. Jaurès afterwards explained, referring to the text of the poem, that it was not an incitement to civil war, but a reminiscence of the artillery of the Revolution, which was pointed at the enemies of France. That interpretation by the author of an ambiguous passage in his oratory opens a wide horizon of conjecture, for history sometimes repeats itself, and we all know of the young Corsican gunner who first directed his batteries against the invader the year after the Carmagnole came in fashion. It may be that a European war may solve some of the social questions which now agitate France by producing a new organiser of Revolution; but meanwhile the Socialist representatives in Parliament do not aid the student in forecasting a peaceful solution of the agitation, either by their speeches or their writings. One may indeed read them for instruction of manners, but it is vain to apply them to establish any doctrine.

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